LETTERS ON EDUCATION.

Macaulay afterwards Lord

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ON

EDUCATION.

WITH OBSERVATIONS ON

RELIGIOUS AND METAPHYSICAL SUBJECTS.

BY CATHARINE MACAULAY GRAHAM.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR C. DILLY, IN THE POULTRY.

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BRITAN
NICVM

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PREFACE.

OF all the arts of life, that of giving uſeful inſtruction to the human mind, and of rendering it the maſter of its affections, is the moſt important. Several very diſtinguiſhed perſons in the rank of literature have acknowledged this truth, by exerting the power of genius in forming rules of diſcipline for taming the untractable mind of man, and bringing it into a proper ſubjection to the dictates of virtue. Indeed we have learned as much from our anceſtors on this ſubject, as mere practical experience could ſuggeſt. But it is to the modern metaphyſicians we owe thoſe lights into the operations of the mind, which can alone afford us a reaſonable proſpect of ſucceſs.

For without an adequate knowledge of the power of aſſociation, by which a ſingle impreſſion calls up a hoſt of ideas, which, ariſing in imperceptible ſucceſſion, form a

cloſe and almoſt inſeparable combination, it will be impracticable for a tutor to faſhion the mind of his pupil according to any particular idea he may frame of excellence. Nor can his inſtructions be adequate to any ſuch management of the mental faculties as ſhall invariably produce volitions agreeable to the laws of virtue and prudence.

If the partizans of liberty and neceſſity would lay aſide their ſubtle inveſtigations, which can never tend to real improvement, and would unite in acknowledging the power of thoſe principles which govern the mind, we might then hope to ſee the education of youth aſſigned to men, whoſe learning, knowledge, and talents, place them at the head of the republic of letters. The culture of that artificial being, a ſocial man, is in its nature ſo complex, there are ſo many evils to be avoided, ſo many important ends to be purſued; there is ſuch a delicate machine to work upon, and ſo much to be apprehended from external cauſes, that the invention of the learned may be employed for ages, before ſuch a ſyſtem of education can be framed as will admit of no improvement.

Every work publiſhed on education that affords one new idea which may be found uſeful in practice, is worthy the attention of the public. Nor does the author of theſe letters aſpire to any other merit than that of offering a few new hints on the ſubject, and throwing ſome illuſtration on thoſe which have been already given. If the novelty of theſe ſhould be made an objection to the work, let it be remembered that every thing new is alarming to the ignorant and the prejudiced; and that morals taught on immutable principles muſt carry a very different appearance from thoſe founded on the diſcordant ſentiments of ſelfiſh man.

A full perſuaſion of the equity and goodneſs of God, with a view to the purity and benevolence for which the precepts of our religion are ſo eminently diſtinguiſhed, has been the author's ſole guide in forming her inſtructions: on the full conviction, firſt, that it is on theſe attributes of the Deity we can alone build any ſuch conſiſtent ſyſtem of morals as will render man generally innoxious and uſeful; or that will force con-

viction on the repugnant mind. Secondly, that the precepts of the goſpel are founded on the true intereſts of man, and have an equal reſpect to his temporal, and ſpiritual happineſs.

In endeavouring to eſtabliſh an opinion of the perfect equity and goodneſs of God, ſome cenſure muſt fall on thoſe principles of religion, and thoſe modes of faith, which repreſent him as partial in the diſtribution of reward and puniſhment. But as the author has never gone out of her way to attack the religious opinions of others, nor has made uſe of any harſh expreſſions in her animadverſions, ſhe has a right to expect the ſame mildneſs and candour from thoſe who may differ from her.

She is aware that the introducing ſenſible impreſſions in divine worſhip, with a view to induce religious ſentiment, and raiſe the mind to the contemplation of Deity, has been productive of the greateſt abuſes in religion. But let it be remembered, that in a ſpeculative theory of education, in which thoſe principles are to be conſidered which have an uniform tendency to ſublime, refine, and

and ſoften the mind; the influence of ſuch impreſſions could not be paſſed over. Their being adopted, and brought into practical uſe, muſt be left to the judgment of others, and that favorable period of time, when knowledge ſhall be too generally diffuſed through ſociety, to give grounds for any ſuch apprehenſion as the revival of a groſs idolatry; and when the great and the luxurious, tired of their preſent modes of diſſipation, may be willing to appropriate ſome of the ornamental arts to the ſervice of religion.

Cavillers may raiſe objections to the author's rules of education on the following grounds.—That the plan can alone be carried into general practice by the opulent; and that the needy, and thoſe of moderate fortune, are by their circumſtances precluded from attempting it. To theſe objections the anſwer is plain and fair.—That it is men of opulence alone who can reap the choiceſt fruits of the induſtry and ingenuity of their ſpecies—That the education of the great, were it properly attended to, and purſued on the beſt rules, would be felt in the improved virtue of all the ſubordinate

claſſes of citizens—That there would be no end of framing rules of education for all the different ranks and ſituations of men—And that general ſyſtems have only to do with general principles, which are to be carried into practice as far as private judgment and the particularities of ſituation may direct.

Having thus endeavoured to remove the principal objections which may be made to a work that has ſome ſmall claim to original thinking, the author thinks it incumbent upon her to give to the public thoſe reaſons which induced her to reprint, in a new publication, what has already been given in another form. Firſt, the principles and rules of education now laid before the public, are founded on the metaphyſical obſervations contained therein. Secondly, the candid criticiſm on theſe obſervations, by the critical and monthly reviewers, gave her room to hope, that if ſome of the moſt important faults were corrected, they would be found worth the notice of all thoſe who were deep thinkers enough to receive any pleaſure from metaphyſical diſquiſition. Thirdly, and laſtly, the circumſtance which

corroborated

corroborated the ſtrength of theſe encouragements, was a letter, written without any intention of being publiſhed, which appeared in the Gentleman's Magazine for September 1789. It was found among the papers of a gentleman of uncommon celebrity in the literary world, with whom ſhe never had the happineſs of being acquainted. A quotation from this letter reſpecting her immutability, will be ſeen in the note below*. She thinks the unbiaſſed judgment of Mr. Badcock a ſufficient authority

* "I have at laſt ſeen Mrs. Macaulay Graham's metaphyſical performance. Her work is really wonderful conſidering her ſex; and in this I pay no ill compliment I hope to the ladies; for ſurely they themſelves will generally acknowledge that their talents are not adapted to abſtract ſpeculations."

"On a ſecond peruſal of Mrs. Macaulay Graham's book, I ſaw more, much more in it, than I did at the firſt haſty glance I took at it. I have read it through with attention, and was well repaid by the entertainment and ſatisfaction it afforded me. She is not only a bold and fervid writer, but a ſhrewd and acute reaſoner. The language in ſome places is very animated, and flows in a ſtrain of Ciceronian fullneſs."—Original letters of Mr. Badcock, publiſhed in the Gentleman's Magazine for September, 1789.

for reprinting the moſt important parts of the matter in another form: and ſhall only add, that ſhe has endeavoured to correct the faults which he has candidly pointed out, as well as her abilities would admit.

CONTENTS.

PART I.

LETTER I.

INTRODUCTORY Letter.

LETTER II.

The Queſtion of Public and Private Education conſidered.

LETTER III.

Reaſon ſuperior to Inſtinct—Bodily Strength neceſſary to the Practice of the higher Virtues—Climate, a very ſubordinate Share in forming the Character—Improper Method of treating Infants in France—Treatment of Infants in America partly recommended—Mothers entering into modern Diſſipation, improper Nurſes—Great Advantage of a lively Nurſe—Exciting the Paſſions of Reſentment and Terror, to be avoided.

LETTER IV.

On the Uſe of Animal Food—Sugar—Hardy Habits beſt acquired in Infancy—great Attention unfavourable to the tender Organs of Children—Inſtruction to be communicated, more as an Amuſement than a Taſk—Amuſement and Inſtruction of Boys and Girls to be the ſame.

LET-

LETTER V.

Books proper for the amuſing of Children.

LETTER VI.

Dancing—Muſic—Needle-work—the Advantages of an innocent Employment.

LETTER VII.

The great Advantage of inducing Habits of Independence in Children—Fortitude a neceſſary Quality to be implanted in the youthful Mind—Stories which excite Terror and Surpriſe, careſully to be avoided.

LETTER VIII.

Happineſs more likely to be found in the gentle Satisfactions, than in the higher Enjoyments—Filling the Imagination of young People with Proſpects of future Enjoyment, improper.

LETTER IX.

On the Vice of Lying—Religion.

LETTER X.

Severity in the Education of Children, improper—indiſcriminate Indulgence cenſured.

LETTER XI.

Neceſſary Qualities in a Tutor—Envy—Pride—Vanity—Puniſhment.

LETTER XII.

Benevolence.

LETTER XIII.

The ſame Subject continued.

LET-

LETTER XIV.

Literary Education of young Perſons.

LETTER XV.

Literary Education continued—Religion—Foreign Travel—Novels.

LETTER XVI.

Influence of Impreſſions—Example ſhould coincide with Inſtruction—Phyſical Prudence—Indiſcretion.

LETTER XVII.

Indiſcretion—Sophiſtry.

LETTER XVIII.

Politeneſs—Faſhion—Sobriety—Perſonal Beauty.

LETTER XIX.

Secrecy—Flattery—Modeſty—Selfiſhneſs.

LETTER XX.

Sympathy.

LETTER XXI.

Morals muſt be Taught on immutable Principles.

LETTER XXII.

No characteriſtic Difference in Sex.

LETTER XXIII.

Coquetry.

LETTER XXIV.

Flattery—Chaſtity—Male Rakes.

LETTER XXV.

Hints towards the Education of a Prince.

PART

PART II.

LETTER I.

Influence of Domestic and National Education.

LETTER II.

Athens.

LETTER III.

Sparta.

LETTER IV.

Rome.

LETTER V.

Observations on the State of the Romans, after the Subversion of the Commonwealth.

LETTER VI.

Causes which may have hitherto prevented Christianity from having its full Effect on the Manners of Society.

LETTER VII.

Duty of Government towards producing a general Civilization.

LETTER VIII.

Sympathy—Equity.

LETTER IX.

Observations on Penal Laws—Houses of Correction—Charity.

LETTER X.

Hints towards a more general Civilization by an Attention to the Objects of Sense.

LET-

LETTER XI.

Gardening—Architecture—Domeſtics—Drama.

LETTER XII.

Religious Sentiments univerſal among the Ancients.

LETTER XIII.

Hints towards rendering the fine Arts ſubſervient to Religion.

PART III.

LETTER I.

On the Origin of Evil.

LETTER II.

On the unlimited Power of God.

LETTER III.

That the injudicious Defenders of Religion have given Means of Triumph to the Infidel.

LETTER IV.

Perfect Benevolence of God—Obſervations on Lord Bolingbroke's Philoſophy.

LETTER V.

The ſame Subject continued—a Revelation in the Perſon of Chriſt, worthy of Divine Wiſdom—Arguments for the belief of a future State.

LETTER VI.

The ſame Subject continued.

LETTER VII.

The ſame Subject contined—Moral Perfections of God.

EETTER VIII.

Obſervations on Lord Bolingbroke's Philoſophy.

LETTER IX.

Some of the Contradictions to be found in Lord Bolingbroke's Works, pointed out—no miraculous Interpoſition neceſſary to confirm or ſtrengthen the Evidence of Goſpel Revelation.

LETTER X.

On the Philoſophy and Doctrines of the Stoics.

LETTER XI.

The ſame Subject continued.

LETTER XII.

The ſame Subject continued.

LETTER XIII.

The Queſtions of Free-will and Neceſſity, involved in the Study of the human Mind—Statement of the Opinions entertained by the Free-Willers.

LETTER XIV.

Obſervations on the Opinions of the Free-Willers—Moral Neceſſity defended.

LETTER XV.

Farther Arguments in Favor of Moral Neceſſity.

LETTER XVI.

The ſame Subject continued.

LET-

LETTER XVII.

The ſame Subject continued.

LETTER XVIII.

The ſame Subject concluded.

ERRATA.

Page 2, line 6, *for* with, *read* to.
3, line 10, *for* they, *read* he.
3, line 12, *for* they limit, *read* he limits.
8, line 14, *for* exiſts, *read* exiſt.
19, line 7, *for* it, *read* them.
24, line 21, *for* afflicted, *read* affected.
26, line 21, *for* her, *read* the.
30, line 21, *before* which, *inſert* in.
34, line 15, *for* if loſt, *read* is loſt.
49, line 1, *for* becauſe ſtate of ſlavery, *read* becauſe it accords with the ſtate of ſlavery.
75, line 11, dele *our*.
77, line 5, *for* our us for, *read* it hinders our providing for.
78, line 3, *for* the, *read* and.
130, line 6, *dele* the comma at Dion, *inſert* a full ſtop at Caſſius.
142, line 11, *dele* for.
176, line 28, *for* it, *read* in.
196, line 26, *for* its, *read* his.
id. line 27, *for* ſhe, *read* he.
305, line 14, *dele* become.
id. line 15, *dele the ſecond* the.
338, line 14, *dele* of the.

LETTER XVII.

The Same Subject continued.

LETTER XVIII.

The Same Subject concluded.

ERRATA.

LETTERS
ON
EDUCATION.

PART I.

Introductory Letter.

So you approve, Hortenſia, of what I have advanced in favour of the future exiſtence of brute animals; but you think that this novel doctrine ſuppoſes their lot to be better than that of the favoured creature, man; for inſtinct in them is ſufficiently ſtrong to prevent their falling into any evil which is not brought on them by external force, whilſt reaſon is ſo impotent in man, as to render him the author of his own miſery.

This acknowledgment in favor of the inferior part of the animal creation, ſo mortifying to the fond prejudices and pride of our ſpecies is

exceedingly flattering to me, becauſe I believe, that I was the firſt perſon who led your atten- to the ſublimeſt of all ſpeculations, viz. the agree- ment of God's providential government with our ideas of his infinite benevolence. Yes, I own with you, that it raiſes in me a mixed ſentiment of contempt and anger, to hear the vain and con- tradictory creature, man, addreſſing the deity, as the god of all perfection, yet dealing out a ſevere and ſhort mortality to the various tribes of his fellow animals, and aſſigning to himſelf an eternity of happineſs, beyond even the reach of his ima- gination. What was man, before he was called into exiſtence, but the duſt of the earth? Can the meaneſt inſect be leſs; and if man and brute were upon an equal footing before the almighty *fiat* went forth, what motive, worthy of divine wiſdom, could influence the deity to draw the line of ſeparation thus wide between his creatures?

The uniform voice of revelation every where proclaims God the univerſal parent of the crea- tion. By this appellation, Hortenſia, I would de- ſcribe a relation more tender than what we com- monly annex to our ideas of the author of nature. Almoſt every ſect of Chriſtians, in order to ſpur on the lazy virtue of their votaries, have repreſented the rigorous juſtice of God, in a light which con- fines his benevolence to a narrow ſphere of action; and whilſt he is repreſented as devoting to an eter-

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nity of torments the far greater number of the human race, the gates of paradiſe are barred to all but the elect. Tremendous thought! It is thus indeed that the gift of eternal life is a dangerous pre-eminence, and the balance becomes more than equal between us and the brute creation.

Theſe are the melancholy viſions of, perhaps, the greater part of the religious world, whilſt to the eye of the modern philoſopher, God is infinite only in his natural attributes; and becauſe they cannot find a more ſatisfactory reaſon for the introduction of moral and natural evil, they limit the power and the benevolence of God, to a ſize which exactly ſquares with all the objects of ſenſe. The philoſopher contemplates the monſter Nature, who is continually devouring and regorging itſelf, with rapture and delight. He views with a complacent ſentiment, myriads of beings brought forth to animated and feeling life, merely to ſerve for the ſupport of creatures, who in their turn muſt pay to the ſtern law of Nature, a tribute equally painful. If you will believe the philoſopher, he contemplates the formidable ſtrength of the lion, endued with powers deſtructive to every tribe of the terreſtrial race, with pleaſure; and whilſt he is protected by circumſtances from the devouring rage of this animal's hunger, the reflecting on his irreſiſtable power, enlarges his ideas of the excellence of its maker.

Such ſentiments as theſe, Hortenſia, you will find thickly ſown through all the writings of the philoſophers, both ancient and modern; for the ancients who were not aſſiſted by goſpel revelation, followed the ſimple courſe of metaphyſical reaſoning, and till the time of Socrates excluded every idea of morals out of their philoſophy. Hence, though they allowed that there was in all animal beings an immaterial principle, yet they ſubjected this principle to an eternal round of degrading and afflicting unions with the forms of terreſtrial exiſtence. It was only the recompence of the virtuous to be again abſorbed into the divine nature; and thus, by the loſs of identity, the reward of the good man was a mere negative boon. The ſound underſtanding and the benign mind of Socrates, rejected a ſyſtem ſo degrading to the deity; he deeply conſidered the nature of moral virtue, and conceived it not only to be of divine origin, but worthy to be regarded as a part of the divine eſſence.

The ray of hope which this view of the ſubject opened to the virtuous, became generally extenſive in its influence, when it was confirmed by the Chriſtian revelation; but the love of novelty, with the abuſes of religion, have in theſe days recalled thoſe errors which darkened the ages of the pagan world. It is in vain that the infidel endeavours to impoſe on our credulity, by a pretended admi-

ration

ration of the moſt uncouth appearances in nature. No, we muſt either totally ſubdue in our mind its ſtrongeſt and moſt natural deſires, with that benign affection which chiefly dignifies the nature of man; or we muſt ſtart with horror from the view of thoſe deformities, which a wiſe Providence has thought proper to ſpread over the face of his works.

Yes, Hortenſia; I will not ſcruple to call the phenomenon of evil a deformity, as received in the doctrines of the infidel; but when we view it with the eye of a rational faith, when we conſider it as a neceſſary prelude to future bleſſings, its uglineſs changes into the properties of beauty, order, and harmony.

Bitterly ſhould I regret a curioſity which had engaged me to outſtep the limits of female education, and pry into the deepeſt receſſes of ſcience, was this more liberal view of things neceſſarily followed with a different idea of the character of the deity, than as he is repreſented in the books of our faith. Here, inſtead of that cold inexorable being, whoſe very perfections deſtroy the hope of the worſhipper, we addreſs a deity whoſe power is only equalled by his benevolence. A deity whom we are told regards us with the tenderneſs of an earthly parent, and who will not ſuffer one ſparrow to fall to the ground without his notice.

This declaration muſt mean ſomething more than the bare philoſophical idea of the omnipre-

ſence of the deity. For my part, I have always conſidered it as greatly in favour of the opinion, which the liberal and candid mind is apt to form on the fate of the brute creation, and have often wondered that the clergy have not from the authority of this text, laid more force on the neceſſity of extending our benevolence to the dumb animals, and that they have not in particular more ſtrongly and more repeatedly reprobated every ſpecies of cruelty towards them, as oppoſite to the dictates both of natural and revealed religion. Eſpecially as the preſumptive proofs which can be collected from the reaſon of things, will loſe their force, if not built on the perfect benevolence of God; an attribute which, when modified in human conception, anſwers to the pureſt ideas we can frame of beneficence, equity, and juſtice. I ſhould have ſmall hopes could I once ſuppoſe him ſo partially benevolent, as to make the final happineſs of one part of the creation his care, whilſt he ſacrificed the reſt to the devouring jaws of death, and to the rage of thoſe relentleſs monſters, who, Proteus like, aſſume an endleſs variety of forms to plague, to torture and deſtroy myriads of living beings, who, could they enjoy their exiſtence in peace and ſecurity, would grace as well as beautify the face of Nature.

Don't be afraid, Hortenſia, your friend is not going to take any poetic flight; excuſe this one

figure

figure made in order to avoid a tedious repetition; and I ſhall leave, as I have hitherto done, the regions of fancy to thoſe favored mortals whom the more tuneful of the nine inſpire. Grave Urania commonly delivers herſelf in humble proſe; and if ſhe deign but to patronize and favor my attempts, I will not envy the laurels which adorn the brows of our moſt illuſtrious bards.

But I think I hear you ſay, "Whither are you going ſo faſt; you have indeed ſaid a good many things very well. But what have you done more than throw a few illuſtrations on a poſition, which I have acknowledged in the very letter to which this is an anſwer; what is all this to the ſolution of my difficulty, or rather, does not a correct idea of the equity of the deity give it greater weight? If the benevolence of God equally extends to all his creatures, why is inſtinct ſufficiently ſtrong in the brute to prevent his falling into any evil which is not brought upon him by external force; and why is reaſon ſo impotent in man as to render him almoſt on every occaſion the author of his own miſery?"

Be not in ſuch a hurry my friend; you muſt indulge me a little while in the moſt delightful of all contemplations. I own to you that, hurried along with the train of ideas which this ſubject preſents, I had almoſt forgot your difficulty, which however I think does not gain force from the correcteſt

idea we can form of the equity of our maker. But in order to give the fulleſt ſatisfaction to your doubts, I muſt endeavour to explain in as comprehenſive a manner as I am able, the ideas I have formed of infinite benevolence, and perfect equity. Firſt, it is certainly inconſiſtent with theſe attributes to create any feeling being, without the intention and the power of conferring happineſs; by which is meant the ſecure and uninterrupted enjoyment of thoſe ſatisfactions which are naturally annexed to the boon of life. Had the powers of God been ſo limited as to render it impoſſible for him to have given life to that varied multitude of beings which exiſts on this terreſtrial globe, without its being attended with terror, endured with pain, and often ended with torture; the fatal gift would have been withheld, unleſs the ſhort lived evil was a prelude to ſome ultimate good. It is perhaps the nature of all finite beings to know things only by compariſon, and this knowledge is well purchaſed, even with the expence of pain. It is on this reaſoning, that I ground my opinion of the future ſtate of brutes. Nor does this opinion limit within preciſe rules the divine will. For it is not neceſſary that infinite benevolence ſhould confine itſelf to the beſtowing only one mode of happineſs, or that all the creatures of God ſhould be equal in every kind of excellence. That there is a chain of ſubordination which gradually deſcends from the

the higheſt poſſible excellence which can be enjoyed by a finite being, down to the loweſt form of animated life, we have great cauſe to believe. It may be the intention of the deity to ſupport, though with ſome variation, ſuch a chain of ſubordination through the endleſs courſe of eternity; but this does not preclude the idea that a great ſhare of happineſs will be enjoyed, even by the loweſt beings in the chain; for if their faculties for enjoyment are more confined in their number, their energy may be enlarged. I know it is natural to the pride and prejudices of man, to look down with contempt on the ſcanty portion of enjoyment which he ſuppoſes is the lot of his fellow animals; but a ſtricter attention to the nature of brutes than is given by the thoughtleſs to the varied works of creation, have convinced me, that the happineſs of all the brute tribe, when unmoleſted by external evil, is very conſiderable; and that a dog who is well fed, and protected from inſult and injury, is almoſt always happier than his maſter.

It muſt be acknowledged then, that the gift of reaſon and the powers of imagination have indeed made a fatal havoc on human happineſs. But theſe gifts are abſolutely neceſſary to ſupport man's ſtate of pre-eminence on this globe, and to fit him for an exalted ſtation in a future life. It is true, that from the creation, men have generally exerciſed their powers in ſuch a manner as to occaſion much

miſery

miſery in this world to the far greater number of the ſpecies, and to cloud their hopes in futurity; but this phenomenon does not prove that reaſon and the enlarged powers of imagination will finally and abſolutely produce more miſery than good to any being who has poſſeſſed them. It is far from a neceſſary conſequence, that theſe gifts ſhould ever produce evil; and when miſery attends them, it always proceeds from incidental cauſes. The human faculties riſe, by practice and education, from mere capacity to an excellence and an energy which enables man to become the carver of his own happineſs. It is the capital and diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of our ſpecies, ſays lord Monboddo, that we can make ourſelves as it were over again, ſo that the original nature is ſo little obvious, that it is with great difficulty we can diſtinguiſh it from the acquired.

The attention I have given to my own character, Hortenſia, and to the means by which it has been formed, obliges me to ſubſcribe, without reſerve, to this opinion of the Scottiſh ſage, viz. that man, in a ſtate of ſociety, is as artificial a being as his repreſentation on the canvaſs of the painter. Nature indeed ſupplies the raw materials, and the capacity of the workman; but the effect is the mere production of art. I have often ſmiled, when I have heard perſons talk of their natural propenſities; for I am convinced, that theſe have undergone

gone ſo great a change by domeſtic education, and the converſe of the world, that their primitive modes are not in many beings even diſcernable. No; there is not a virtue or a vice that belongs to humanity, which we do not make ourſelves; and if their qualities ſhould be hoſtile to our happineſs, we may aſcribe their malignancy to human agency. There is not a wretch who ends his miſerable being on a wheel, as the forfeit of his offences againſt ſociety, who may not throw the whole blame of his miſdemeanors on his education; who may not look up to the very government, by whoſe ſevere laws he is made to ſuffer, as the author of his misfortunes; and who may not with juſtice utter the hardeſt imprecations on thoſe to whom the charge of his youth was entruſted, and to thoſe with whom he aſſociated in the early periods of his life. The very maniac, who languiſhes out his miſerable exiſtence in the phrenzy of diſtraction, and that more unfortunate madman, who retains a ſufficient ſemblance of reaſon to colour his misfortune with the deformity of turpitude, might have found a cure, or a ſoftening remedy to their maladies, from the ſources of philoſophy, had its balſam been adminiſtered before the paſſions had taken root in the mind.

To abate the pride of the lofty minded, let it be remembered, that our talents, our accompliſhments, and our virtues, are chiefly owing to the care and

the

the wiſdom of others; for when they are gained by the price of our own exertions, it is almoſt always at the expence of our innocence and our peace.

If this is the caſe, and that it certainly is ſo, the hiſtory of man ſufficiently proves, why, though the magiſtrate ſhould neglect his charge, does the parent conſign to miſery, the wretched offſpring of whoſe fate he is entirely the maſter? Why does he not rear the moral plant, committed to his care, to a vigorous maturity? and thus, by the powers of ſympathy, partake of the good he beſtows, and lay up a treaſure in filial piety and virtue for the neceſſary wants of age.

It is a barbarous ignorance which has hitherto defrauded man of the means which he enjoys from his reaſoning powers, to ſecure his happineſs in the preſent and future ſtate.

The ancients, to their honour be it ſpoken, had a much more anxious care for the morals of their offſpring, than the moderns, and were conſequently more elaborate in their plan of education. I have often read with pleaſure, in the letters of the great men of Rome, at the time when the republic had almoſt touched the height of its depravity, the ſtrongeſt ſentiments of parental tenderneſs, and the moſt anxious care for the educational improvement of their children. In the dialogues of Plato, we may find, that no

expence

expence was ſpared by the Athenians to beſtow the benefits of learning on their ſons; and even the Europeans, after the revival of letters, made the education of their children the object of their moſt important concern. The ſlow progreſs of philoſophical knowledge, retarded by foreign and domeſtic broils, by the continual wars which nation waged againſt nation, and family againſt family, the errors of paganiſm, and the ſuperſtitions which in general faſtened on chriſtianity, rendered it impoſſible that education in thoſe times ſhould be ſufficiently correct to effect its beſt purpoſes.

But in theſe enlightened days, when we have gained ſome uſeful inſights into the wondrous fabrick of the human mind, much might be done in the way of education towards the happineſs of nations and individuals; but, good God! what uſe are we making of our advances in knowledge? a ſenſeleſs courſe of diſſipation, and an unwearied exertion to procure the means of luxury, diverts our attention from the objects of our true felicity, and renders us callous to the woes of others. We are always looking over the point within our reach, and attempting to lay hold of good, where it is impoſſible to be found. Generation ſtill continues to impel generation to thoſe abyſſes of miſery which error prepares for her votaries.

Oh magiſtrates! Oh legiſlators! admit of ſome variation

variation in your views of intereſt; conſider, that in attempting to teach others, you may gain truths of the utmoſt importance to yourſelves. Conſider what will be the ſolid ſatisfaction, which a benign temper muſt feel, in becoming the inſtrument of the preſent and future welfare of numberleſs beings. And you, parents, remember, that the miſery or bliſs of your poſterity, in a great meaſure depends upon yourſelves, and that an inattention to your duty, may draw on your head the guilt of many generations.

LETTER

LETTER II.

The Queſtion of Public and Private Education conſidered.

THE inſtruction of youth, Hortenſia, was regarded by the ancients as an important part of the buſineſs of government, and many uniform plans of education have been given by Plato and other ſpeculatiſts, for the forming the children of a ſtate in ſuch a manner as ſhould beſt conduce to render them ſerviceable to its glory and proſperity. To thoſe who ſacrifice the natural and feeling being, man, to a factitious and unfeeling being of their own creating; to thoſe who regard him as the ſlave to the country which gave him birth, and would mould him to the faſhion which is ſuppoſed beſt to ſuit its intereſts; to ſuch legiſlators who would form man for the uſe of government, and not government for the uſe of man, the ſpeculations of Plato and other moraliſts on this ſubject, muſt appear in a very advantageous light. For what can more conduce to the proſperity and permanent power of government, than to form in the earlieſt infancy the prejudices of its ſubject. Social man, as I have already obſerved, is a mere

artificial being, and when you have the power of moulding him, it is your own fault if his faſhion does not ſuit your purpoſes. Why, ſays the legiſlator, give up to the caprice, and the ignorance of individuals an object of ſuch importance? Why take out of the hands of the political father, that means of inſtruction by which the underſtanding of the people may be enlightened, and their morals preſerved? And why ſubject the one to the tyrannical act of inflicting puniſhment for offences which, had he performed his duty, might have been avoided; and the other from falling continually a victim to his wants and his ignorance?

Theſe arguments are ſo plauſible, that in the preſent wretched ſtate of domeſtic education, I have often thought them unanſwerable. Yes; when I have beheld the ſmall attention of the opulent to this firſt of ſocial duties; when I have beheld a multitude of little wretches conſigned to the care of penury and wickedneſs, and educated for the purpoſes of deſtruction; I own to you that I have turned my thoughts from the diſguſting contemplation, and have endeavoured to amuſe myſelf with ſpeculative ſyſtems of public education. Yes, I have traced over, and with encreaſing ſatisfaction, theſe airy works of the imagination. Here I have beheld with all that pleaſure which benignity feels in viewing

objects of general utility and happineſs, public nurſeries for infants of all ranks, where a perfect equality was preſerved in all the regulations which affect the health and well being of the race, than leaving theſe important cares to the nurſes, and the phyſicians appointed by government to the office. I have ſhifted the ſcene, and purſued the various public inſtitutions through all the progreſs of moral education, till I have produced multitudes of finiſhed citizens fitted for thoſe various occupations which are neceſſary to ſupport the glory and the proſperity of ſociety; all properly ſorted, according to the allotments which beſt ſuit the rank or the genius of the ſubjects. Theſe delightful reveries, however, did not ſo far intoxicate me, as to make me entirely paſs over the difficulties which hang on my ſyſtem.

No; I turned the other ſide of the teleſcope, and was frightened with the view of the enormous ſums which it would annually take to ſupport theſe uſeful inſtitutions: but I was comforted with the recollection, that if the rules of œconomy are preſerved, numbers may be more eaſily provided for in the aggregate, than when they are ſeparated into particulars; and therefore it would be lighter on the pockets of the people to pay a tax to government for the education of their offſpring, than to take that charge on themſelves, eſpecially as ſuch a tax might be regulated according to the

rank, the fortune, and conſequently the expectations of the citizens. I will not expatiate here on all thoſe various crimes which a public education, if well planned, would prevent, nor on thoſe enlargements of moral good, which it would effect. The ſubject is a fruitful one, and I could extend it to the ſize of a long letter, were I to explain to you the political advantages which might accrue from a wiſely conceived, and a well adminiſtered plan of this kind, with the advancement which it muſt neceſſarily occaſion in public and private happineſs. But now I perceive a very formidable antagoniſt, who with a fierce and indignant aſpect upbraids me with having deſerted the cauſe of freedom, and of forging chains for the uſe of deſpotiſm.

He claims as his natural and unalienable right, the unmoleſted exerciſe of parental authority in the bringing up and tutoring his offspring; and he ſays, he ſhall regard himſelf as materially injured in this right, if he does not uſe his pleaſure in the making his child either a Turk, an Infidel, or a Chriſtian; a rogue, or an honeſt man, as beſt ſuits his views and purpoſes.

It is true, Hortenſia, that I have put the claim of my adverſary in a very diſadvantageous light; but though there is a great deal to be ſaid on both ſides the queſtion, I proteſt to you, that I never did hear any forcible argument urged againſt the expediency

expediency of veſting government with the charge of education; for it is abſurd to oppoſe natural rights to any ſcheme of policy which would probably tend to encreaſe the happineſs of ſociety, and the only political argument which we can admit on the ſubject, is that corrupt and narrow ſpirit which pervades all governments, which renders it faithleſs to every truſt, and which conſequently deſtroys every reaſonable ground of confidence.

Yes, Hortenſia, I do not know one European government who could be ſafely truſted with the care of education, nor that ſociety, who would not by ſuch a truſt, endanger the eternal loſs of their deareſt rights; for what fetters can bind ſo ſtrongly, or ſo fatally, as thoſe which are faſtened on the mind? but there are other reaſons leſs obvious, yet as forcible, for the not taking the education of youth out of thoſe hands to which it is at preſent entruſted.

Firſt, if government were inclined to do their duty, they might, by the influence of wiſe laws, and a correſpondent example, in a great meaſure obviate the evils which have in all ages ariſen from the inattention, the ignorance, and the vices of parents: and ſhould the ill-tutored youth have acquired, in the courſe of his domeſtic education, ill principles and habits, the converſe of the world would meliorate his prejudices, would ſoften the inveteracy of his habits, and perhaps, in time,

would effect a total change in his opinions and ſentiments.

2dly, A public education may be formed on the very beſt plan; may be conducted by the wiſeſt rules; and yet, in many points, it may fall ſhort of what may be effected by domeſtic inſtruction. The one cannot, in the nature of things, be ſo elaborate as the other: beſide, what tutorage can equal that which proceeds from the attentive zeal of an enlightened parent? what affection leſs warm and intenſe will preſcribe and follow ſuch rules of ſelf denial, as is neceſſary to preſerve the pupil from receiving any impreſſion which may be miſchievous to his future innocence and peace? When the object is viewed in this light, it would be folly to give up the privilege of forming our offspring according to the brighteſt model of virtue which our imagination can conceive. Indeed, ſo forcible and ſo important appears in my eyes this laſt urged reaſon, for the preference of domeſtic education, that to thoſe opulent idlers, who have neither the capacity nor the inclination to fulfil in their own perſons, this moſt important of the parental duties, and who conſign their children over to the care of ſchool maſters, I would recommend to them to be very liberal of their treaſures to thoſe enlightened perſons who are every way qualified for the education of youth, and to inſiſt on the limiting their pupils to a ſmall number; for though the languages

may

may be very well taught in large ſchools, yet the morals muſt neceſſarily be totally neglected.

I have in my former letter obſerved, that the ancients were more elaborate, and more correct in the education of their youth, than the moderns; but few treatiſes have been handed down to us on this important ſubject. The works of the ſtoics, are general principles of action, and rules of conduct; but they do not enter into the minutiæ of things, nor give any precepts on the manner of forming the young mind, and rendering its powers ductile to the taſk of conforming to theſe rules. I know indeed of no authors of repute who have touched on the ſubject, but Plutarch and Xenophon; and generation ſucceeded generation, without adding one thought in the way of improvement to the ideas of theſe ſages.

At length Fenelon took the pen in hand. The penetration of this great man was only equalled by his genius. The human mind, which had puzzled every other examiner by the variety of its powers, did not entirely eſcape his ſearch. His diſcoveries have been eminently uſeful to ſucceeding writers. Even in this day, the tutor of a prince would not be deficient in the duties of his high office, did he properly apply the rules for education which are to be found in the charming poem of Telemachus. His other work on education, though a little burthened with the

errors of ſuperſtition, is replete with judicious obſervations; and without intending to diminiſh the merits of thoſe excellent genius's * who have illuſtrated the thoughts of Cambray, he has left them little more to do, than to amplify his hints to render them conſpicuous to the vulgar reader, and to methodize them into practical uſe.

But to what a length has my ideas on one ſubject or another carried me? I intended that this letter ſhould contain ſome general hints on the medical and moral education of infants. But I find that I have already exceeded the reaſonable length of a letter; I will confine my next to this ſubject, and to this ſubject only.

* Rouſſeau, Genlis.

LETTER III.

Reaſon ſuperior to Inſtinct—bodily Strength neceſſary to the Practice of the higher Virtues—Climate a very ſubordinate ſhare in forming the Character—improper Method of treating Infants in France—Treatment of Infants in America, partly recommended—Mothers entering into modern Diſſipation, improper Nurſes—great advantage of a lively Nurſe—exciting the Paſſions of Reſentment and Terror, to be avoided.

EXPERIENCE, Hortenſia, is the only efficacious inſtructor of man. It is by an extenſive knowledge of the relation of things, and the effects of cauſes, by which our reaſon becomes a more valuable gift than thoſe inſtinctive powers which nature has beſtowed on the brute. We have great reaſon to think, that in the firſt ages of ſociety, man had more evil to ſuffer from the inferior animals, than his powers could enable him to inflict on them. The debt of vengeance has been ſince paid with an intereſt, which, whilſt it inclines us to regard man as a monſter of cruelty, and an eternal ſcourge to all inferior beings, it very fully proves the ſuperiority of the reaſoning faculties over the inſtinctive powers. The grand object of a rational being muſt be the enjoyment

of every good of which his nature is capable: conſequently we muſt conclude, that the beſt uſe we can make of that extenſive experience which the hiſtory of man from the firſt ages of the world to the preſent times afford, is to unite as much as poſſible every advantage which belongs to a ſtate of nature, and a ſtate of civilization.

The advantages which belong to a ſtate of ſociety, when highly civilized, are numerous; thoſe to a ſtate of nature are not many, but they are of a very important kind, viz. that independence, which few wants, and few deſires give; and that corporal ſtrength, which is capable of reſiſting by its energy, all the rigors of the ſeaſon. Though it may be granted, that ſuch a degree of corporal ſtrength as man enjoyed before he was pampered by any kind of luxury, may be incompatible with a life of eaſe and enjoyment; yet it is more certain, that no human enjoyment can be great, without a robuſt habit of body. That the mental powers are afflicted by an union with corporal weakneſs; that it commonly gives a taint to the morals; and that a conduct uniformly virtuous, muſt be the joint iſſue of a good head and a ſound conſtitution. Bodily ſtrength was the chief object of Spartan diſcipline. Their cares on this ſubject began with the birth of their offspring; and inſtead of entailing the curſe of feebleneſs on their women for the ſake of augmenting their perſonal beauty,

beauty, they endeavoured to improve their natural ſtrength, in order to render them proper nurſes for a race of heroes.

What kind of diſcipline was uſed in a Roman nurſery, I believe has never been handed down to poſterity; but we know, that the diſcipline of the Roman youth was of a kind to enable them to bear the utmoſt hardſhips that a military life, attended with difficulties unknown to the moderns, could preſent. The characters indeed of the old Romans, and the modern Italians, differ ſo widely, that this inſtance only, overthrows the hypotheſis laid down by Monteſquieu, and ſupported by ſo many plauſible arguments, viz. "the potent influence of climate over the manners and cuſtoms of ſociety, and conſequently in the forming the ſtrong lines of national character."

Ignorance regards every object which carries the appearance of a ſatisfaction, as an acquiſition; hence, as new modes of luxury preſented themſelves, they have been eagerly adopted, without conſidering the evil which lurks beneath the ſmiling good. The privilege of reſting their weary limbs on clean ſtraw, was regarded by our anceſtors as one of the luxuries which only belonged to opulence; and if repoſe was gained, health was not loſt in the indulgence. But the unwearied induſtry of the indigent to gain money by temptations, preſented to the opulent, and the eager deſire

deſire of theſe to enlarge their gratifications, ſoon converted ſimple truſſes of ſtraw into more coſtly and more commodious ſeats of reſt. Theſe again gave way to others, yet better ſuited to the purpoſes of luxury, till invention touched at the point of perfection, and completed her work in the form of a down bed. Thus, inſtead of encreaſing the number of our agreeable ſenſations by the health and ſtrength of our bodies, we leſſened our gratifications by enfeebling the powers from whence they ariſe; ſubjected ourſelves to many painful diſeaſes, and by enervating our conſtitutions, hurried on that criſis which extinguiſhes life, and with it all the means of enjoyment.

The active induſtry of man, in the procuring good, and avoiding evil, and his reſtleſs deſire to amend his ſituation; though it may ultimately tend to the bettering his condition, yet it leads him into many miſchievous and fatal errors. We do not often eſtimate the good of an object by its real qualities, but by the trouble and expence it puts us to in the procuring it. We do not attempt to render ourſelves by proper habits, capable of ſuſtaining, without injury, the operation of external objects; but we endeavour, by a variety of manœuvres, to weaken their force.

Thus, inſtead of following the ſimple courſe of nature, which would have induced habits proper for bearing the continual changes of her atmo-

ſphere,

ſphere, we have enervated our bodies with heated apartments, and begun our operations on thoſe of our offspring, from the very moment of their birth. When I trace what were the general cuſtoms which prevailed ſixty years ago in the medical treatment of infants, I am filled with wonder, that nature, although ſhe is ever exerting her powers to repel the injury ſhe ſuſtains from folly and ignorance, ſhould ever have been able to produce an undeformed adult, with a ſound and vigorous conſtitution. This nation, which has lately had the honour of ſetting the example in all the improvements that experience dictates, has left off their ſwaddling clothes, their lukewarm bathings, their almoſt roaſting the bodies of their infants before large fires, with their confined and hot nurſeries. Yet the enchanting eloquence of the ſagacious Rouſſeau, has not yet been able to effect any general reformation in the mode of treating infants in France. In the ſouthern provinces of that empire, I have beheld little wretches ſwathed up like mummies, and their tender limbs kept in ſuch an enfeebling heat by the encumbrance of their dreſs, that I have almoſt regarded their being reared to a ſtate capable of enduring the hardſhips which penury often inflicts upon them, as an exertion of nature almoſt equal to a ſecond creation. Nature, however, cannot in all inſtances repel the injuries ſhe receives;

ceives; and deformity is much more common in that part of the world, than it is at preſent in Great Britain. I have heard medical people ſay, that infants never come crooked into the world; and that this evil is always the conſequence of a weak frame injudiciouſly treated. The American ſettlers availed themſelves of their communication with the natives, to reform the errors which in this point they carried from Europe. They never beheld an artificial monſter among the ſavages; and they ſo far adopted their cuſtoms, as almoſt entirely to root out crookedneſs from their ſocieties.

Though man, ſays the philoſopher, is, when young, the moſt helpleſs of all beings, and continues for a long time ſo dependant on others, as to owe his exiſtence entirely to their care and nurture; yet I am convinced by experience, that the powers of nature are not even in the beginning of life ſo very weak as we are apt to imagine. We know there are numerous ſocieties of ſavages, who exiſt without any of the arts of life, even in climes far removed from the tropics; but ſo forcible are firſt prejudices, and with ſuch pliancy does reaſon adopt her powers to the ſtrengthening and confirming them, that I own to you, I am hardly yet reconciled to the method followed by the Americans, of expoſing the bare heads of new born infants to all the inclemency of the ſeaſons. They

tell

tell you they learn from the natives, that ſuch a ſtrength is given to the parts by this treatment, as to reſiſt a very high degree of external force; and moſt undoubtedly a very great difference in favor of the ſavage muſt exiſt between his ſkull and the ornamented pole of an European lady, who, ſacrificing time and eaſe to the gratifications of vanity, endures with more than Chriſtian patience the tortures of the headach, for the conſcious ſatisfaction of vindicating the elegance of her taſte, or improving her perſonal charms.

I am convinced that an American ſkull has little to fear, but from a cudgel or a ſcalping knife; yet I would not adviſe European nurſes to attempt on our debilitated progeny, the expoſing their bare ſkulls to the external air, before the ſutures of the head are cloſed. I ſhould much fear that a fatal cold would enſue, which if it did not injure the principles of life, might fix ſuch an obſtinate obſtruction in the veſſels of the head, as to be felt through the whole courſe of life.

But though I would never try ſuch hazardous experiments on my little patients, as might juſtly incur their regret and reſentment when they were of an age to perceive differences; yet I am convinced, that every endeavour which may be conſiſtent with prudence, ſhould be uſed to attain the advantage of a hard ſkull. I perceive you ſmile, Hortenſia; this I know by ſome whimſical

aſſociations is become the common appellation for a blockhead: but I am ſo thoroughly convinced that corporal ſtrength is favourable to genius, that I would rather have had an American ſavage for my nurſe, than thoſe to whoſe care my infancy was committed. Many a time has my pen been wreſted from my hand by the tyranny of a head-ach; many a time have I deplored the influence of early habits; perceived miſtakes which it was impoſſible for me to remedy, and lamented infirmities acquired before I enjoyed the privilege of a voluntary agency. But away with this egotiſm! one can never have a worſe ſubject to diſcuſs than dear ſelf, for we are ever more intereſted in it than the perſon to whom we addreſs our diſcourſe; and I have often laughed at the ridiculous ſituation which I have obſerved myſelf and others to be in, when relating with a paſſionate vehemence a ſucceſſion of afflicting evils to hearers, who could hardly force ſuch a ſeeming attention as is conſiſtent with common politeneſs. So much more weight have the ſlighteſt circumſtances which concern ourſelves, than the moſt important ones which can effect others; that I would adviſe the perſon who ſeeks for pity and relief from the ſympathy of friends, to be very brief in his tale of woe; to deal in generals as to himſelf, and to dwell on thoſe particulars which his hearer has a perſonal concern.

Yes, Hortenſia; vanity is with moſt of us a much more predominant quality than ſympathy; and in ſituations of diſtreſs, more advantage may be drawn from lord Cheſterfield's rules, than from a refined oratory.

But to return again to my little patients, whoſe heads I have left in a very whimſical ſituation, for we have not yet determined in what manner they are to be treated. Firſt, I would adviſe the nurſes to waſh the whole body of the infant daily with a ſpunge, after which I would cover the head with a ſingle cloth cap, which, when its ſutures were cloſed, I would reduce to the thinneſs of a fine cambric. Let the infant wear this night and day till the head is furniſhed with the natural and ornamental clothing of hair; for I own to you, that I would not entirely neglect appearances, when ſuch a compliance is not too dearly bought; for infants as well as adults make very uncouth figures with bald heads; and ſo thin a covering as a fine cambric, when cold water is daily uſed, cannot I think in any manner counteract nature in her progreſs of confirming and ſtrengthening the parts.

I am one of thoſe who regard the character of a lady Bountiful with veneration, but I do not intend ſo highly to aſſume it here, as to give any rules on that part of the medical treatment of infants, which particularly belong to the practitioners in the medical art. No; the reverence which is

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juſtly due to theſe gentlemen for their ſcience and knowledge, and ſome prudential reaſons for not unneceſſarily drawing on myſelf the contempt or anger of ſo formidable a fraternity, would be ſufficient reaſons to deter me from ſuch an undertaking; but on a ſubject ſo intereſting as bowel diſorders, to which infants are particularly expoſed, I will venture to mention a treatment obſerved by a noted phyſician to his own infant child, which engaged my attention, as being particularly judicious. He gave the infant frequently a tea ſpoonful of the pure gravy of meat, which when well concocted by fire, I have found by experience to be a powerful alkaline. This kind of food, you know would formerly have been regarded as a ſlow poiſon, if given to young infants; but the faculty have lately found out that the body is beſt ſupported by viands of a nouriſhing quality, which are light of digeſtion. This is remarkably the property of pure gravy, when not given in too large a quantity; and its alkaline powers render it an excellent corrector to the acidities in human milk.

Rouſſeau's addreſs to mothers, ſo well calculated to inſpire ſentiments of duty, and to call forth the latent affections of the maternal breaſt, has introduced a kind of faſhion among the great for taking upon themſelves the taſk of ſuckling their infants; but on this ſubject, I am entirely of

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Genlis's opinion, and think that the cuſtom is almoſt always of more prejudice than good to infants. Can you expect that a fine lady ſhould forego all her amuſements and enter into the ſober habits of domeſtic life, in order to enable her to nouriſh her offspring with wholeſome food? can you expect that ſhe ſhould part with her luxuries, for fear of endangering the being ſhe has undertaken to ſupport? Now, milk overheated with midnight revels, and with the paſſionate agitations of a gameſter's mind, muſt have qualities rather injurious than beneficial to life; and I have heard it ſaid, that the tender nerves of children are ſo ſtrongly affected by perfumes, that they have fallen into convulſions on being expoſed to the action of odoriferous ſcents.

There are few authors, Hortenſia, whom I read with more diſguſt than the ſophiſt Mandeville; yet I own to you, that his reflections on ſome of the qualities neceſſary to make a good nurſe for infants, pleaſed me. "What infants ſhould chiefly learn," he ſaith, "is the exerciſe of thinking, and to contract a habit of diſpoſing, and with eaſe and agility managing the images retained to the purpoſe intended; which is never attained better than whilſt the matter is yielding, and the organs are moſt flexible and ſupple. So they but exerciſe themſelves in thinking and ſpeaking, it is no matter what they think on, or what they ſay that is inoffen-

ſive. The more an infant in health is talked to, and jumbled about, the better it is for it, at leaſt for the firſt two years; and, for its attendance in this early education, to the wiſeſt matron in the world, I would prefer an active young wench, whoſe tongue never ſtands ſtill; that ſhould run about and never ceaſe diverting and playing with it; and where people can afford it, two or three of them to relieve one another when they are tired. For this nonſenſical chat of nurſes is of ineſtimable uſe to children, and teaches them to think, as well as ſpeak, much ſooner and better, than with equal aptitude of parts they would do without. The buſineſs is to make them exert thoſe faculties for the time, which, if loſt then, is never to be retrieved." If I ſubſcribe to what Mandeville has advanced, Hortenſia, it muſt be with a proteſt againſt that fooliſh cuſtom which the generality of ignorant nurſes practiſe, of addreſſing infants in a language which muſt be unlearned before they can ſpeak with any correctneſs their mother-tongue: this at the beſt is looſing time, and encreaſing to no purpoſe the labor of children. However Mandeville deſerves conſideration.

The famous Doctor Samuel Johnſon lays great ſtreſs on the habituating youth to make their compoſitions with celerity, as a means of introducing a facility and a quickneſs in the arranging their ideas. The ſublime and eloquent Rouſſeau ſays of

of himſelf, that his ideas uſually preſented themſelves with ſuch confuſion, that he was ſeldom capable of making any extemporary diſcourſe, or of anſwering to his ſatisfaction the expectations of thoſe, who ſought his converſation. Yet in how beautiful a manner are his ideas arranged in his compoſitions, when recollection and reflection had their full ſcope, and the mind, unagitated by a timid anxiety, had full leiſure to wait the deciſions of judgment. The mere orator, and the ſublime author, are formed by geniuſes which differ greatly from each other: the one is the reſult of habit, and a quick and uninterrupted circulation of the animal ſpirits; the other is the offspring of judgment, attention, memory, and acute apprehenſion. It is true, that theſe powers cannot be attained merely by habit, nor do they depend on the uninterrupted circulation of the animal ſpirits, for the leiſure of reflection will make up for theſe defects; but though the mere orator can never become the ſublime author, yet the ſublime author may, by early habits of compoſing with celerity, become the orator; and perhaps the very great difference which we find in the powers of converſation between different perſons, may, in a good meaſure, take their riſe from the different tempers of their nurſes, whether of the gay or the ſerious, the loquacious or the taciturn kind.

The penetrative Fenelon, I believe, was the firſt

who advanced the opinion, that children might be prepared for inſtruction before they were able to ſpeak; and the new philoſophy, which ſuppoſes the human character to be the mere creature of external impreſſions, would naturally preſcribe the commencement of regulating education from the moment of an infant's birth. Fenelon gives a very good inſtance of the infant faculty in the learning a language, which is, to place in our memories a great number of words, and to obſerve the ſenſe of each of theſe words in particular; from whence we may gather, that our conduct towards infants is not a matter of indifference. And though that comprehenſive metaphyſician, Tucker, very judiciouſly obſerves, that the growth of the paſſions may be commonly traced from the eager deſire with which the mind ſets about the buſineſs of accompliſhing its wiſhes; and hence, when it meets with obſtructions, grows firſt ruffled, and then turbulent; yet the paſſion of anger may be obſerved to be of early growth in infants, and undoubtedly is much encreaſed by the fooliſh conduct which ſome nurſes obſerve of making a feigned quarrel, even with inanimate beings, who oppoſe or hurt the child.

Fear alſo muſt be a very natural paſſion in an impotent being; therefore any circumſtance which can throw infants into terror, ought to be carefully avoided; and although I would not lay

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ſo much ſtreſs on the influence of infant education, as with Rouſſeau to refuſe the delightful taſk of pouring inſtruction on the youthful mind, and teaching the young idea how to ſhoot, becauſe I had not the ſuperintendance of the child's education from the moment it drew breath; yet I do think, that a proper attention to the education of infants may conduce to render the taſk leſs difficult, and the labour more effectual, when applied at a more advanced period of life.

LETTER. IV.

On the Uſe of Animal Food—Sugar—Hardy Habits beſt acquired in Infancy—Great Attention unfavourable to the tender Organs of Children—Inſtruction to be communicated more as an Amuſement than a Taſk—Amuſement and Inſtruction of Boys and Girls to be the ſame.

WHEN I recommended the uſe of gravy for ſucking infants, Hortenſia, it was merely on the notion of its being the beſt corrector of the acidities of human milk, and not with the view of bringing them up to be devourers of animal ſubſtances. No—the cruel neceſſity which our wants impoſe on us, to inflict that fate on other beings which would be terrible to ourſelves, is an evil of ſufficient weight, were the uſe of animal diet confined within as moderate limits as the preſent ſtate of things will admit. I can from my own experience affirm with Rouſſeau, that the taſte of fleſh is not natural to the human palate, when not vitiated by carniverous habits. Milk, fruit, eggs, and almoſt every kind of vegetable aliment, ought to be the principal part of the nouriſhment of children.

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I would not feed them with fleſh above three times a week, and that well roaſted and boiled. The ſwallowing blood almoſt in its natural ſtate, fills a delicate mind with horror. It is a diet only fit for ſavages; and muſt naturally tend to weaken that ſympathy which Nature has given to man, as the beſt guard againſt the abuſe of the extenſive power with which ſhe has entruſted him.

It is I believe generally agreed by all the medical profeſſion, that the fleſh of well grown animals, is eaſier of digeſtion than the fleſh of young ones; and as it affords a more generous nouriſhment, a ſmaller quantity of the one will anſwer the ſame purpoſes as a larger quantity of the other. It will then be proper for the tutor to take eſpecial care that the fleſh of young animals be baniſhed from the table of his pupils. Their conſtitution will receive advantage from it; and the taſte they will thus acquire be more agreeable to the principles of benevolence, in forbearing to deſtroy life almoſt in the firſt moments of exiſtence.

Sugar, from its acid qualities, and the oppreſſion which any large quantity of it gives to a ſtomach not uſed by continual habit to this aliment, has lately been very generally baniſhed out of the diet of children. Sugar plumbs, ſweet cakes, and other enticing viands of the ſame kind with which we uſed to engage the affections of the little gluttons, are now prohibited, as injurious ways of

carrying our points with them; and a variety of other means are fallen upon to engage the infantine imagination. But though I am entirely of Mr. Locke's opinion, that we ought not to inflame the natural propenſity of children to gluttony, into an habitual vice, by pleaſing their palates as a reward to their obedience; yet I am far from thinking that ſugar ſhould be entirely left out of the diet of children. Sugar has very valuable medical properties. It is antiputreſcent in a high degree, and will agree with all ſtomachs when they are uſed to it. It has ſufficient warmth to correct the coldneſs of raw fruit, and it has a ſufficient ſtimulating quality to make up for the uſe of fermented liquors, which never ought to be given children; beſides, every taſte that is ſo general as the love which children have to ſweet viands, ſhould be attended to as the dictate of Nature for ſome uſeful end.

Let them be fed then once a day with fruit of ſome kind, dreſſed with ſugar only; let care be taken that they eat a good deal of bread with this meal, and that their mouths are well waſhed after it with cold water; and thus the taſte will be gratified, and every miſchief avoided which can reaſonably be expected from ſuch an indulgence.

I cannot leave this ſubject, Hortenſia, without making ſome remarks on a very capital neglect in the education of our anceſtors in reſpect to the preſervation of one of the moſt uſeful, as well as ornamental

ornamental of Nature's gifts. The materials which compoſe the human frame, are more durable than perhaps is at preſent imagined. Nature, I am perſuaded, never intended to deprive us of our teeth, whilſt we had any uſe for them. It is abſurd to ſuppoſe that ſhe would take from us what is ſo neceſſary, both for the purpoſe of articulation, and chewing our food. No; it is warm liquors, warm beds, and warm night-caps, which deprives the mouth of its greateſt ornament, and gives to age its higheſt deformity. Whilſt every ſubſtantial corporal bleſſing is ſacrificed to a vain and fooliſh idea of feminine beauty, our habits tend to deprive us of the reality. Formerly, when women had attained the age of thirty-five, they were obliged to give up every pretenſion to beauty; and vanity under the appearance of decency, ſought to hide the injuries ſhe had ſuſtained from the joint operations of time and error. We are now more than verging on the other extreme; and old women greatly heighten all the defects of age, by ornaments ſo fantaſtic, as do in ſome meaſure even diminiſh the luſtre of youth and beauty.

The medical treatment of infants is, I believe, very much the ſame in the nurſeries of the opulent through the whole kingdom. But we ſhould ſeldom or perhaps never hear of conſumptions, if the cuſtom was adopted of putting on the linen cold; and if the practice was continued of bathing the

the whole body in cold water, from the period of infancy to a ſtate of maturity. It is almoſt inconceivable to what a degree of hardineſs children will attain, when their habits are all favourable to this end. Yes; if an abſurd and ſenſeleſs prudery did not interfere to taint the unſpotted mind, by obtruding on it its own groſs ideas, the little innocents, wholly taken up with their ſports, would either not feel, or not regard, the action of the air on their naked bodies; and thus inſure a robuſt conſtitution before that period when decency requires us to conform to the manners of ſociety. Do not miſtake me; I do not mean that children ſhould not be cloathed, but let their cloathing be thin; never ſubject them to the trammels of ſtays; and when in health, ſuffer them to run about for at leaſt an hour before you put on their ordinary dreſs.

It was formerly the practice to burthen the infant with ſhoes and ſtockings the moment its little body was emancipated from the reſtraint of ſwaddling clothes. It is now, I believe, the cuſtom to let them go without ſhoes till they can walk, and to forbear for ſome time longer the uſe of ſtockings; but as the proper circulation of the blood muſt in a great meaſure depend on the firm texture of all the veſſels in the extreme parts of the body, I am apt to think, that the luxury of ſhoes and ſtockings, not to make any mention of

carpets, has been of the moſt fatal kind. The whole train of nervous diſeaſes, with the gout, and other chronic diſorders, if they have not taken their riſe from this indulgence, muſt be greatly aggravated by it; and for this reaſon, I would keep my pupils' feet unſhackled, either by ſhoes or ſtockings, for the firſt half dozen years of their childhood; nor would I impoſe on them the latter, till they were of an age to be introduced in form into company, when a conformity to the manners of ſociety becomes a very neceſſary part of conduct. What, ſays Hortenſia, are we to give up the ornament of an elegant little foot, for ſchemes of advantage which are perhaps only viſionary? What is health without beauty—that pleaſing quality of the ſex? And do not we know, that among our artificial perfections, that of a little foot is one of the moſt conſpicuous? Why truly, Hortenſia, I am ſufficiently ſingular to regard health as one of the firſt of human bleſſings; and even on the ſubject of beauty, I confeſs to you, that I differ ſo much with the crowd, as to believe, that if there is ſuch a reality in nature as beauty, it muſt conſiſt of ſymmetry and proportion. A foot too ſmall for the ſize of the body, is, in my eye, rather a deformity than a beauty; it ſhows bad nurſing almoſt as much as the rickets; it carries the imagination to all thoſe diſagreeable and painful inequalities which are the attendant on tight

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ſhoes. And if littleneſs alone, independent of proportion, conſtitutes the beauty of feet, we can never pretend to vie with the Chineſe, whilſt we preſerve the privilege of walking *. Nature, if you do not reſtrain her, or turn her out of her courſe, is equal to the taſk both of faſhioning the beauty of the perſon, and confirming the ſtrength of the conſtitution; whilſt every practice that counteracts her operations, will be found materially injurious in one or other, or in both of theſe intereſting particulars.

Both Locke and Rouſſeau have very properly inſiſted on the not intrenching on the freedom of children, by taking up that time in the laborious taſk of learning, which Nature deſigned to be ſpent in thoſe bodily exerciſes which are ſo neceſſary to corporal health and ſtrength; and Fenelon obſerves, that you ought (with great care) to manage the organs of young children, till they become ſtrengthened by a more mature age. Many ingenious devices have been propoſed, and many more might undoubtedly be found, well adapted to the teaching children the rudiments of language

* Mr. Locke obſerves, that the women in China are very little, and ſhort lived; and that theſe defects are by ſome imputed to the binding their feet, whereby the free circulation of the blood is hindered. If there is any truth in this obſervation, it ſhows, that it muſt be of no ſmall importance to health, as well as beauty, to leave, whilſt children are growing, every part of the body free, to be nouriſhed as Nature deſigns.

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and ſcience, under the pleaſing guiſe of amuſement. The ſtate of a child's brain is ſo unfavourable to continued application, or to carry on a ſeries of rational deduction, that it is no wonder the taſk of literature ſhould be an object of terror; and to be dragged to it from ſome delightful ſport, muſt render the mind particularly averſe to ſuch application.

It is obſervable, ſays Mr. Locke, that children will take a great deal of pains to learn ſeveral games, which, if they ſhould be enjoined them, they would abhor as a taſk. As all unknown objects delight from their novelty, the curioſity of children is eager and inſatiable; this, if properly called forth and directed, makes the buſineſs of inſtruction eaſy. The habit alſo of attention to all the objects which ſurround us, preſerves the mind from the ſollicitude of care, and the uneaſineſs of want; it ſecures our innocence and our peace; and it renders us active, uſeful, and agreeable. How many perſons do we know, who go through life with ſo little of that knowledge which the large volume of Nature amply diſcloſes to the obſerving eye, that one would think they had ſome defect in their ſenſes: yet theſe perſons are not ſtupid; they are only ignorant; they have fallen into the hands of lazy or inſufficient tutors, who have ſuffered the ſeed time of knowledge to paſs away without that enlargement of

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the ideas, which, by opening new views to our imagination, ſtimulate us to engage, with a chearful aſſiduity, both in the ſtudy of nature, and the productions of art. The rules laid down by Rouſſeau, to pour inſtruction into the young mind, by uſing it to a cloſe examination of ſenſible objects, and the methods which he preſcribes to excite the attention of children, and to ſet their reaſoning faculties in motion, is, I think, one of the moſt uſeful parts of this entertaining performance; but though I heartily concur with the ideas he has given on this ſubject, and would adviſe every tutor to read his Emilius with care; yet let him not be ſo charmed with the eloquence and plauſibility of the author, as to adopt altogether the rules laid down in this work on the ſubject of inſtruction. We were not born to play all our lives; induſtry, both corporal and mental, is neceſſary to our happineſs and advancement, both in this, and a future ſtate; and when the organs of the brain have attained a ſufficient firmneſs for the taſk of literature, young pupils ought to be exerciſed in the ſtudy of books, or ſuch inveterate habits of idleneſs will be acquired as will be impoſſible afterwards to ſubdue.

The moderns, in the education of their children, have too much followed the ſtiff and prudiſh manners of ancient days, in the ſeparating the male and female children of a family. This is well adapted

adapted to the abſurd unſocial rigour of Grecian manners; but as it is not ſo agreeable to that mixture of the ſexes in a more advanced age, which prevails in all European ſocieties, it is not eaſy to be accounted for, but from the abſurd notion, that the education of females ſhould be of an oppoſite kind to that of males. How many nervous diſeaſes have been contracted? How much feebleneſs of conſtitution has been acquired, by forming a falſe idea of female excellence, and endeavouring, by our art, to bring Nature to the ply of our imagination. Our ſons are ſuffered to enjoy with freedom that time which is not devoted to ſtudy, and may follow, unmoleſted, thoſe ſtrong impulſes which Nature has wiſely given for the furtherance of her benevolent purpoſes; but if, before her natural vivacity is entirely ſubdued by habit, little Miſs is inclined to ſhow her locomotive tricks in a manner not entirely agreeable to the trammels of cuſtom, ſhe is reproved with a ſharpneſs which gives her a conſciouſneſs of having highly tranſgreſſed the laws of decorum; and what with the vigilance of thoſe who are appointed to ſuperintend her conduct, and the falſe biaſs they have impoſed on her mind, every vigorous exertion is ſuppreſſed, the mind and body yield to the tyranny of error, and Nature is charged with all thoſe imperfections which we alone owe to the blunders of art.

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I could ſay a great deal, Hortenſia, on thoſe perſonal advantages, which the ſtrength of the mother gives to her offspring, and the ill effects which muſt accrue both to the male and female iſſue from her feebleneſs. I could expatiate on the mental advantages which accompany a firm conſtitution, and on that evenneſs and complacency of temper, which commonly attends the bleſſing of health. I could turn the other ſide of the argument, and ſhow you, that moſt of the caprices, the teaſing follies, and often the vices of women, proceed from weakneſs, or ſome other defect in their corporeal frame; but when I have ſifted the ſubject to the bottom, and taken every neceſſary trouble to illuſtrate and enforce my opinion, I ſhall, perhaps, ſtill continue ſingular in it. My arguments may ſerve only to ſtrengthen my ideas, and my ſex will continue to liſp with their tongues, to totter in their walk, and to counterfeit more weakneſs and ſickneſs than they really have, in order to attract the notice of the male; for, ſays a very elegant author, perfection is not the proper object of love: we admire excellence; but we are more enclined to love thoſe we deſpiſe *.

There is another prejudice, Hortenſia, which affects yet more deeply female happineſs, and female importance; a prejudice, which ought ever to have been confined to the regions of the eaſt,

* See Mr. Burke on the Sublime and Beautiful.

becauſe

ſtate of ſlavery to which female nature in that part of the world has been ever ſubjected, and can only ſuit with the notion of a poſitive inferiority in the intellectual powers of the female mind. You will ſoon perceive, that the prejudice which I mean, is that degrading difference in the culture of the underſtanding, which has prevailed for ſeveral centuries in all European ſocieties. Our anceſtors, on the firſt revival of letters, diſpenſed with an equal hand the advantages of a claſſical education to all their offspring; but as pedantry was the fault of that age, a female ſtudent might not at that time be a very agreeable character. True philoſophy in thoſe ages was rarely an attendant on learning, even in the male ſex; but it muſt be obvious to all thoſe who are not blinded by the miſt of prejudice, that there is no cultivation which yields ſo promiſing a harveſt as the cultivation of the underſtanding; and that a mind, irradiated by the clear light of wiſdom, muſt be equal to every taſk which reaſon impoſes on it. The ſocial duties in the intereſting characters of daughter, wife, and mother, will be but ill performed by ignorance and levity; and in the domeſtic converſe of huſband and wife, the alternative of an enlightened, or an unenlightened companion, cannot be indifferent to any man of taſte and true knowlege. Be no longer niggards, then, O ye parents, in beſtowing on your offspring, every bleſſing

which nature and fortune renders them capable of enjoying! Confine not the education of your daughters to what is regarded as the ornamental parts of it, nor deny the graces to your ſons. Suffer no prejudices to prevail on you to weaken Nature, in order to render her more beautiful; take meaſures for the virtue and the harmony of your family, by uniting their young minds early in the ſoft bonds of friendſhip. Let your children be brought up together; let their ſports and ſtudies be the ſame; let them enjoy, in the conſtant preſence of thoſe who are ſet over them, all that freedom which innocence renders harmleſs, and in which Nature rejoices. By the uninterrupted intercourſe which you will thus eſtabliſh, both ſexes will find, that friendſhip may be enjoyed between them without paſſion. The wiſdom of your daughters will preſerve them from the bane of coquetry, and even at the age of deſire, objects of temptation will loſe ſomewhat of their ſtimuli, by loſing their novelty. Your ſons will look for ſomething more ſolid in women, than a mere outſide; and be no longer the dupes to the meaneſt, the weakeſt, and the moſt profligate of the ſex. They will become the conſtant benefactors of that part of their family who ſtand in need of their aſſiſtance; and in regard to all matters of domeſtic concern, the unjuſt diſtinction of primogeniture will be deprived of its ſting.

LETTER

LETTER V.

Books proper for the Amuſing of Children.

THE loweſt niche in the temple of Fame, Hortenſia, has been an object ſufficiently deſirable to ſtimulate human ambition; but as the meaner honors of literature, with every conſideration merely lucrative, are overlooked by thoſe whoſe views extend to eminence, the taſk of amuſing the fancy of children, has in general fallen into the hands of perſons contemptible both in their judgment and abilities.

So great a ſhare has experience in forming the difference in point of taſte between the child and the adult, that it will be difficult for any perſon not well verſed in the progreſs of the arts, to conceive an adequate idea of the meanneſs and rudeneſs of every firſt attempt in any of its branches; and were ſuch a perſon to read the productions of ſome of our firſt bards, who wrote before the revival of Roman and Grecian literature, he would be at a loſs to determine which was the greater dunce, the author or the reader. However, I make no doubt that Bateman's ghoſt, and even many inferior compoſitions, have conferred on their authors

the advantages of fame and fortune. But as the honors of Parnaſſus are of all ſublunary bleſſings the moſt tranſitory, the triumph was ſhort lived, and was ſucceeded by a degradation to the circle of the nurſery. Here, though the popularity of the bard was leſs honorable, it was more permanent; and ghoſts and hobgoblins, giants and dwarfs; ſorcerers and witches, with many ſtrange tales of unaccountable acts of human proweſs and human atrocity, have afforded ſuch conſtant delight to children and their attendants, that parents, to induce habits of reading, have in general indulged their offspring with lectures ſo well calculated to gratify a childiſh imagination. What were the baneful effects, which raiſing commotions in the tender brains of young children produced, I ſhall not in this place notice, but proceed to obſerve, that as every kind of traſh calculated for the circle of a nurſery, was a ſaleable commodity, authors without number enliſted in the ſervice. Among the foremoſt of theſe, we may place the counteſs D'Anois; her fairy tales are told with a little more imagination and taſte, than is common to moſt of theſe performances; and there are no repreſentations in them of ſo frightful a nature, as to leave any very deep impreſſion on the mind. But though I would in general reprobate almoſt every compoſition, written in the laſt century for the uſe of nurſeries, yet there are ſome of them which

which I greatly prefer to the vaſt catalogue of books which have been written ſince; and which, with a view of giving ſentiment to children, have miſled their judgment in almoſt every capital point in morals and religion. Tom Thumb, Jack Hickathrift, Jack the Giant Killer; and ſome few more hiſtories of this kind, may be regarded as mere negatives as to their effects on the mind; but thoſe tales which endeavour to recommend virtue, not from its intrinſic value; not from that tranquillity of ſoul, which ever attends it; not from that mental enjoyment, which God has annexed to the practice and cultivation of the benign affections; but from ſome carnal advantage with which its votaries are to be conſtantly rewarded, ought to be exploded from every ſyſtem of education. Yes; you will agree with me, Hortenſia, when you conſider that they hold out an imaginary bribe, which muſt corrupt the young mind, which muſt give it an erroneous idea of the ways of Providence; which muſt ſicken it of a ſervice which diſappoints its ſanguine expectations; which muſt incline it to tax God with injuſtice; and to ſeek in the vices and pleaſures of the world, for that good which it has been taught to conſider as its due.

There is another deception which runs through the whole of theſe works, and which is, perhaps, as baneful in its conſequences as the

former; this is the conſtant union of virtue with perſonal charms. This teaches the young mind always to look for virtue where it is, perhaps, for very obvious reaſons the ſeldomeſt to be met with. This confounds the ſuperior with the inferior excellence; and, as ſenſible objects ſtrike the moſt forcibly on the imagination, muſt occaſion youth and inexperience to loſe every idea of the one, in the attractions of the other.

But beſides theſe groſs miſtakes, the ſentiments which are to be found in theſe books do not always correſpond with the beſt morality; and if they did, they affect duties and relations, which are beyond the ſphere of a child's knowlege and underſtanding.

But the taſk of writing books for children, has not always been confined to the dunces among the literati. Fontaine and Gay have added laurels to the poet's crown, by condeſcending to exert their eminent abilities for the purpoſe of amuſing and forming the infant mind; but as Rouſſeau well obſerves, the morals of Fontaine's fables are ſo complicated and diſproportionate to the capacities of children, that they might rather induce them to vice than virtue. The ſame may be ſaid of Æſop's fables, which, though they were certainly written for the advantage of grown children, have in modern days been univerſally conſigned to the uſe of nurſeries. The morals of Gay's fables are not complicated

plicated, as the morals of Fontaine's; but like the little hiſtories before mentioned, they reſpect duties and relations which lie out of the ſphere of a child's underſtanding; and being read before they can either be taſted or comprehended, they are neglected at an age when the poet's harmonious lay would captivate the fancy and draw attention to his inſtructive tale.

Madame Genlis, whoſe charming and elegant pen has juſtly merited and obtained general approbation, has, in the conducting of her drama, avoided the objections that lay againſt almoſt every previous work which has been publiſhed for the uſe of children. Her moral is pure and ſimple; her compoſition well adapted to the underſtanding of her readers; and though written in a ſtile and taſte which might gratify a mature judgment, it is calculated to give pleaſure and inſtruction to the moſt youthful mind. Madame Genlis's uſeful walk of literature has been very ſucceſsfully followed by ſucceeding writers; and I can venture to pronounce a decided judgment on the merits of a work entitled L'Ami des Enfans. Such indeed is the value of this publication, that it muſt afford both pleaſure and inſtruction to children from the period previous to their having acquired the art of reading, to the time when their taſte and judgment is ſufficiently matured to enter into a high line of literature.

The indulgent Fenelon has pointed out many ways of enticing the fancy of children to an attention to their books, by decorations on the outſide, and ornamenting the inſide with pictures. The laſt of theſe arts is at this day practiſed on the vulgar, and is found to be the only bait which can induce them to make purchaſes in the literary way. They may have the effect which Fenelon propoſes; but the making children fond of reading will not be found a matter of much difficulty, when we conſider what an unlimited power we have over their imaginations. I would adviſe the tutor however not to preſs his young pupil to give attendance, when he is eagerly engaged with ſome other favourite purſuit. I would adviſe him to furniſh himſelf with an entertaining ſtory; but above all, to put on the appearance of confering a great favor, when he is beſtowing his attention and inſtruction. By this means he may be certain that his pupil will earneſtly ſolicit that, as an indulgence, which he would with a contrary management, regard as an evil.

The vanity of parents is much ſoothed by hearing the applauſes given their children when they recite ſpeeches out of plays, and practiſe other arts of declamation; but as Nature does not at this age give the language of the paſſions, a child, when he thus declaims, muſt be as merely imitative as a parrot; and as he can only give an affected

affected tone to words he does not underſtand, and to ſentiments he never felt, he can afford no real ſatisfaction to any auditor of taſte. Let it be therefore the ſole care of the tutor, to teach his pupil to ſpeak plainly, clearly, articulately, and without affectation. To know and to practiſe the grammatical accent; to ſpeak loud enough to be heard; but never to raiſe his voice higher than the occaſion requires,

LETTER VI.

Dancing—Muſic—Needle Work—The Advantages of an innocent Employment.

THERE are ſome forms, Hortenſia, ſo well adapted to acquire gracefulneſs, that Nature has left very little for Art to accompliſh. There are others again which ſeem to ſet at defiance the ſkill of the dancing maſter; and which in the moſt favorable ſituations in life, carry as vulgar an appearance as if they had been always confined to the ruſtic manners of a cottage. However, I am apt to think that theſe uncouth beings have ſuffered ſome injury from the errors of firſt habits. Gracefulneſs is an idea of beauty belonging to poſture and motion; in both of which, to be graceful, ſays Mr. Burke, it is requiſite that there be no appearance of difficulty; a ſmall inflection of the body is required, and a compoſure of the parts in ſuch a manner as not to incumber each other, nor to be divided by ſharp and ſudden angles. As this is, I believe, a very juſt definition of the quality of gracefulneſs, it appears to me probable, that it might be attained by every child, if committed at an early age to the care of the dancing-maſter;

maſter; and whoſe treatment from its birth had been adapted both to ſtrengthen, and give a pliability to its limbs. Rouſſeau has a great averſion to a Paris dancing maſter; but though I agree with that author, that ſteadineſs and firmneſs of attitude is commonly united to grace and elegance; yet I ſhould not carry my pupils to a rugged rock, in order to attain it. I own to you, that whilſt I was beholding them leaping from point to point, I ſhould be too much affected by my fears to give the proper inſtructions on the various attitudes which were neceſſary to prevent them from receiving, perhaps, a fatal fall. No; I ſhould prefer attending them in their own apartments, whilſt they were learning a becoming agility from thoſe who had made the gracefulneſs of poſture and motion their ſtudy; and though they were to learn a few monkey tricks from the Marcel * of the age, I ſhould not regard it in a more formidable light, than other parts of their juvenile exerciſes. Let opulent parents then put their children, as ſoon as they can walk with firmneſs, under the care of the beſt dancing maſter they can engage; only let the tutor obſerve the ſame management in this reſpect, as has been recommended on the ſubject of reading; let him treat the learning to dance, as a paſtime, not a taſk.

When the little family are become adepts in the

* A celebrated dancing maſter at Paris.

art, I would adviſe the parents to treat them with a ball once a week; for whilſt employed in dancing, they can enjoy the ſociety of their young friends, without that intercourſe which might infect them with the errors of their neighbour's education; and dancing is a wholeſome exerciſe in a large well aired room, when not continued till too late an hour in the evening.

Yes, Hortenſia, notwithſtanding the lively and plauſible arguments urged by Rouſſeau for indulging children in the liberty of chuſing their time of reſt, I would ſtill keep to the cuſtom of our anceſtors, in putting them to bed at an early hour in the evening. I would only take care that the nurſery maids ſhould not indulge in ſuch hours as would diſable them from taking them up proportionably early in the morning; nor would I diſpenſe with the attendance of the tutors and governeſſes; for I hold it to be indiſpenſable to the duties of their office, never to ſuffer their pupils to be out of their ſight.

The manner in which our anceſtors divided their time, was undoubtedly more favourable to bodily health and mental improvement, than that diviſion which even the moſt ſober part of modern ſociety have adopted; and though adults aſſert their native rights, by making even a pernicious uſe of the freedom of choice, let it be the privilege of our children to be governed by the dictates

tates of wiſdom. Let us not ſuffer their habits to oppoſe the principles of reaſon, even in thoſe parts of conduct which are the leaſt important, leſt ſuch a deviation ſhould affect the more important ones; and whilſt the empire of power laſts, let us exert it over our pupils in forcing their compliance to thoſe rules of life which tend to confirm both the health of the mind and body.

Every age has its particular character, Hortenſia. Love, chivalry, and romance, are the leading features of one; gravity, hypocriſy, and a puritannical preciſeneſs, of another; but what ſhall we ſay of the times in which we live, where the motley garb of folly confounds by its variety, and where ſhow and ornament in all caſes, take the lead of ſolid excellence.

It is true, that in obedience to the authority of old cuſtoms, we have not yet diſcarded the claſſics out of our boys ſchools; nor are our univerſities turned into academies for the ſole purpoſe of teaching muſic, dancing, and drawing. But as the entire neglect of our immediate anceſtors in the education of their daughters, has left us unſhackled by old rules, we can model them according to the true ſtandard of modern taſte. We can make them miſtreſſes of the fine arts; and render them equally capable of captivating, by their accompliſhments, the eaſtern deſpot, or the European fine gentleman. Theſe

are

are delightful privileges; but I own to you, that my pride and my prejudices lead me to regard my ſex in a higher light than as the mere objects of ſenſe. I would diſpenſe with ſome of thoſe dazzling accompliſhments, in order to preſerve to them that rank which God has given them among his creatures. My pupils then, ſhall not be devoted to the attainment of the lighter accompliſhments. To dancing, I would add muſic, or drawing, as may beſt ſuit the turn of their genius; but I would teach them to ſet the proper value on ſuch attainments, and to conſider them in no more favourable a light, than as ſources of elegant and innocent amuſement. It is true, that the mere getting rid of time, appears an object of the firſt conſequence to moſt people of fortune: yet it is certain, that a long and induſtrious life will hardly put us in the poſſeſſion of every requiſite for the attainment of true wiſdom; and the mind of man commonly ſinks under the weight of infirmities, before it has received half the cultivation neceſſary to its perfection. When I behold, therefore, a young perſon of independent fortune, applauded by a numerous audience, for having executed in a maſterly manner a very difficult piece of muſic, I cannot help reflecting on the many hours which muſt have been daily devoted to the frivolous taſk of modulating air into ſound. I cannot help conſidering ſuch praiſe as merely deceptive; and that

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there would be more propriety in confining it to thoſe whoſe dependant ſituations induce a neceſſity for ſo great a ſacrifice. In ſhort, I am apt to object to that excellence which I hear thus applauded, and, with ſentiments of the ſame nature with which Alexander's dancing inſpired Philip of Macedon, to cry out, that the young gentleman, or lady, performs too well.

But as you are a great admirer of the ancient Greeks, Hortenſia, you will perhaps be diſguſted with what you will regard as a contrariety of opinion to the rules obſerved by them in the education of their youth. I acknowledge, that the ancients entertained high notions of the beneficial effects of muſic on the human mind; nor do my ſentiments widely differ from theirs; but it has been obſerved, by perſons better verſed in the art of muſic than I pretend to be, that thoſe kinds of it which are excellent as pieces of art, ſeldom penetrate farther than the ear; and that though elegant in a high degree as pleaſures of ſenſe, they contribute to encreaſe imbecility; nor are they able to produce thoſe lively emotions of the mind, which are the genuine effects of muſic. Thoſe inſtruments, which are ſaid to have produced wonderful effects on the paſſions of the ancients, were ſimple in a great degree, and therefore a comparatively moderate dexterity was ſufficient to effect all the great purpoſes of muſic. For this reaſon, I have

have often wondered, that in proportion as our rage for becoming practitioners in the art encreaſes and grows more general, we ſhould depart from that ſimplicity which renders its attainment compatible with all the uſeful avocations of life.

I have ſaid before, Hortenſia, that the induſtry of a long life is hardly ſufficient for the attainment of wiſdom; and ſhort as is the period allotted us for diſcipline and improvement in this ſtate of our exiſtence, it cannot all be employed in the exertion of the higher faculties. Many hours muſt be given to ſleep; ſome to the uſe of thoſe refreſhments which are neceſſary to ſupport our natures; and many to mere amuſement. For experience has proved, that ſtudy and reflection, when too long continued, become as injurious to the mental powers, as the oppoſite extreme.

The habits acquired by a decent education, will commonly preſerve men from the ſloth of the ſluggard, and the intemperance of the glutton. But it is in the choice of our amuſements, and the well filling up thoſe hours, devoted to the pleaſures of the imagination, rather than to the exerciſe of the underſtanding, on which our virtue and felicity in a more particular manner depend.

The art of needle-work, had formerly Minerva for its patroneſs; and though it has been too much depreciated in modern days, it has been in all ages highly inſtrumental to the preſervation of female

virtue

virtue and happineſs. On theſe reaſons I would rather ſee it reſume all its former importance, than be entirely left out of female education. Let us not give up one of the great privileges of female life, which is the conſent of the world, that we may amuſe ourſelves with trifles. Let us not look with a ſupercilious contempt on an art ſo juſtly valued by our anceſtors, and which, from its endleſs variety, affords an inexhauſtible ſource of innocent enjoyment.

But why ſhould we ſuffer our prejudices to deprive our ſons of a valuable privilege? Don't be frightened, Hortenſia; I am not going to give the diſtaff into the hands of my male pupils. No; but ſheltered from the ſarcaſms of the critic, by the authority of a Locke and a Rouſſeau, I will venture to recommend the teaching of boys ſome handicraft buſineſs, as an occupation to fill up the yawning inſipidity of a vacant hour. For though we have had a good many ſatyrical animadverſions on the art of turning, I would rather ſee my pupils engaged in the innocent employment of forming a button, than in ſpending whole days in hunting down a harmleſs animal, both at the hazard of their necks, and at the expence of their benevolence.

LETTER VII.

The great Advantage of inducing Habits of Independence in Children—Fortitude, a neceſſary Quality to be implanted in the youthful Mind—Stories which excite Terror and Surprize, carefully to be avoided.

IT is the peculiar quality of vanity, Hortenſia, to find grounds for ſelf conceit from thoſe very circumſtances, which to the eye of the philoſopher, are ſubjects of abaſement. Epictetus, with a peculiar vivacity, deſcribes the man of wealth in a ſtate of almoſt equal dependance and humiliation to that of an infant. We all talk of the bleſſings of liberty; but ſurely he alone is free, who ſtands in no need of the aſſiſtance of others to put his deſigns in execution. Hence, ſays Rouſſeau, it follows, that the greateſt of bleſſings is not authority, but liberty. This author is ſo well convinced of the truth of his maxim, that his ſyſtem of education is founded on independence; and all its parts are rendered conducive to this end. But a very whimſical accident which befel a great prince, will elucidate the juſtice of Rouſſeau's opinion better than any other matter of fact which preſents itſelf to my remembrance. One of the kings of Spain finding

finding himſelf greatly affected by the overheated air of his apartment, from the influence of too large a fire, the domeſtic was called, whoſe privilege it was to attend his majeſty in this department. The domeſtic was unluckily out of the way—what was to be done? Were none of all the numerous ſervants which crowd a court, preſent to aſſiſt his majeſty? Yes, there were many; but inſtead of flying to ſhew their zeal for their prince's eaſe and ſafety, they were deliberating on the propriety of ſtepping out of their place; and as the ſtory ſays, the monarch was almoſt ſuffocated before any one ventured to invade the province of the nobleman whoſe office it was to ſuperintend his fire. Perhaps you will think, Hortenſia, that an incident, which could never have had exiſtence but in the formal court of Spain, is little to the purpoſe of elucidation; but I am perſuaded of the contrary; and when you reflect on the many privations which people who cannot help themſelves ſuffer when any of their attendants are out of the way, and how often their patience is put to the trial in waiting for the aid of others, you will be of my mind.

The conſciouſneſs of independence diſarms even poverty of its terrors; and the ſatisfactions which await it, will annex even to moderate poſſeſſions, more felicity than is often the lot of the opulent. I am not ſpeaking on ſpeculative

grounds, but on the experience of others, who have confeſſed to me, that the diminution of their fortune has been made up to them by regaining ſome of that independence of which the habits of opulence had deprived them.

It ought certainly to be the aim of rational perſons to confine, as much as poſſible, their wants and deſires within the compaſs of their own powers; and when this is applied to a ſtate of infancy, all the rules of education will flow from it. Let the opulent parent then indulge his vanity and his indolence, with that aſſiſtance from his domeſtics which Nature gave him powers to perform himſelf; but let him not fetter his offspring with chains, which prejudice alone makes him conſider as benefits.

I would not ſuffer more perſonal attendance to be given to any pupils of mine, than what their tender age rendered neceſſary; and the mode of rendering it ſhould be ſuch as would convey the humiliation of weakneſs, rather than the triumph of wealth. Thus I ſhould excite an ambition, which would forward all my purpoſes: for my pupils would feel the debaſement of dependance, and aſpire after that moment when they ſhould be able to ſerve themſelves.

Whether, Hortenſia, we adopt Hartley's doctrine of vibration, or Tucker's complicated ſyſtem of organization; or diſcarding both the one and the

the other, content ourſelves with tracing the cauſe and courſe of our ideas, their propenſity to run into cluſters on the moſt diſtant ſimilarity between them, and the vaſt power and ſtrength of ſuch aſſociations, we ſhall find no difficulty in accounting for theſe various turns of character we find in our ſpecies, by the early impreſſions made on the infant mind.

The Spartans were, of all people, the moſt renowned for their fortitude, magnanimity, and martial proweſs; nor can we wonder at their preeminence in the heroic virtues, when we conſider that the rules of their education were all directed to the great end of giving firmneſs and vigor, both to mind and body. But good God! how greatly did the conduct of our anceſtors differ in this reſpect? At the ſame time that they made an idol of the virtue of courage, both the prieſt and the nurſe conſpired to deſtroy the native energies of the mind, and to plant in their room a timidity and cowardice, which nothing but the impetuous paſſion of pride, and the irreſiſtable feelings of ſhame, could ſubdue. It is to theſe paſſions alone, ſometimes combined with the impulſe of as violent a ſentiment, that all the atchievements of chivalry are owing. I believe no one will contend with me this point, that knight errantry was the effect of an inflated imagination, acting on the youthful paſſions; but I am convinced, that every ſpecies

of courage which does not ariſe from the influence of a well directed education, may all be claſſed among the baſtard kind; and as it can never be the reſult of philoſophic reflection, muſt ariſe from either of the two extremes, an inſenſibility in the mental frame, or the impetus of a ſtrong paſſion.

Sorcery, witchcraft, omens, and dreadful apparitions, for many ages hung like a black cloud over the imagination both of the warrior and the determined coward; and the mind, bewildered in the dark miſt of error, found every thing to apprehend both in its preſent and future ſtate.

As the policy of the church led her to the eaſier taſk of operating on the terrors of men, rather than on their underſtandings, the paſſion of fear, was cultivated with an indefatigable attention. It was intended, that this vice, like Aaron's rod, ſhould ſwallow up all the reſt; and it is remarkable, that in Petrarch's dialogue between himſelf and ſaint Auguſtine, he makes the ſaint argue, that the derilection of all men proceeded from their impreſſions not being ſufficiently lively on the ſubject of thoſe ſufferings which awaited them after death. To this Petrarch anſwers, that notwithſtanding his many imperfections and infirmities, his imagination was not defective in this particular; ſo terrible to him was the idea of the grim king of terrors, that often when he laid down to reſt, inſtead of being

refreſhed with the balmy comforts of ſleep, he was thrown into unſpeakable agonies; his limbs were bedewed with a cold ſweat; and at length he was obliged to riſe, in order to find ſome object to diveſt his mind of its unſupportable burthen.

It is eaſy to ſee, that the church gained too much from the miſery of its votaries, to relinquiſh her ſtrong hold over the imagination. It was ſufficient to anſwer her purpoſes, if ſhe made men ſuperſtitious: there was no neceſſity to make them good. The errors of education on which I have been ſpeaking, have not been carried to that exceſs in this country as formerly. The good Fenelon, with Locke, and other writers of reputation, have enlightened men's minds on this part of education; but the progreſs of improvement has been ſlow. The lazineſs and diſſipation of parents will not ſuffer them to ſuperintend the education of their offspring, with that unrelaxing vigilance which the importance of the taſk requires; and I much doubt, whether thoſe who are left to the care of vulgar attendants, are not ſtill kept in order by being ſhut up in dark cloſets, and with threatenings of being delivered up to the power of thoſe objects of fancy, which at one time is made the ſubject of their amuſement, at another of their diſcipline. Many men, who are not remarkable for their timidity, have confeſſed to me, that they have never ſo thoroughly gotten over thoſe impreſſions which

have been made on them in infancy, as to poſſeſs themſelves with equal eaſe in the dark, as in the light; and that they could not go through a church yard in the duſk of the evening, without feeling the full weight of the ſtories of the nurſery. And one of my female American acquaintance, aſſured me, that ſhe could never ſo entirely ſeparate the idea of ſenſation from the mere clay of her compoſition, as to be reconciled to the thoughts of her body being confined in a coffin under ground.

Rejoice then, in a ſituation, oh! ye opulent parents, which enables you to conſign the drudgery of education to thoſe who are better fitted for the charge! Be not ſparing of your purſes; and conſider, that it is the great privilege of the wealthy, to avoid the evil of vulgar ſociety, and to be attended in their infancy by perſons of cultivated minds. Never ſuffer your offſpring to be from under the eye of the tutor, or the governeſs; never let them converſe with ſervants; and you may be ſure, that the tales of ghoſts, apparitions, fairies, and the old man who runs away with naughty children, will only be mentioned to be laughed at. Other means will be found out to prevent them from running into miſchief, than the trite caution of not doing this or that action, leſt they ſhould die and be put into a pit hole. Rouſſeau ought to be conſulted on the many pleaſing inventions which he has found out to reconcile

children

children to darkneſs, and to make them exert in this ſituation their natural powers. Nor will Madame Genlis be neglected, who has fallen upon many ingenious devices, to arm the human mind with the virtue of fortitude.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

Happineſs more likely to be found in the gentle Satisfactions, than in the higher Enjoyments—Filling the Imagination of young People with Proſpects of future Enjoyment, improper.

IT is obſerved by the moraliſt, Hortenſia, that the vexations of human life, and often its ſevereſt misfortunes, do not owe their exiſtence to any neceſſity impoſed on our nature, but to our ignorance of thoſe matters on which our happineſs depends. If this be true, is it not ſurpriſing that we ſhould be the moſt deceived on thoſe ſubjects which lead to our moſt obvious intereſt; and to which, from a propenſity natural to the whole ſpecies, our attention is more particularly engaged? Paradoxical however as this opinion may appear, the continued ill ſucceſs which attends our moſt ſtrenuous endeavours after happineſs, may be chiefly owing to the warmth and vigour of the purſuit; for whilſt we are ranſacking Pandora's box, to ſeize all the good to ourſelves, and to leave the evil for others, our eagerneſs and inexperience may occaſion us to overlook the little treaſure which would ſupply our

our wants, and to faſten on thoſe contents, whoſe gay and ſplendid appearances promiſe a richer poſſeſſion.

How can happineſs exiſt without pleaſure, ſays Senſibility; and if pleaſure is the ground work of happineſs, ſays Reaſon, why certainly the more pleaſure, the more happineſs; and thus by a rational deduction, we come to the concluſion, that pleaſure, and the means to obtain it, is the only wiſe purſuit of man. Your argument would be very juſt, replies Experience, were our opportunity always within our reach, and were the powers of the human frame and all its faculties, as capable of encreaſing and lengthening enjoyment, as are the boundleſs deſires of man. But as this is not ſo in Nature, as there are limits to which the intenſe pleaſures ſoon arrive, and from which they ever afterwards decline, they are by neceſſity of ſhort duration; and if we endeavour to compenſate for ſuch limitations by the frequency of repetiton, we ſhall loſe more than we gain by the fatigue of our faculties, and the diminution of ſenſibility.

Nor is it the ſenſual voluptuary only who has to lament in the decay of his faculties, the importunity of deſires which can never be gratified, and the memory of pleaſures which muſt return no more. No; the mentaliſt, whoſe enjoyments depend more on thoſe delights, which are adapted to ſoothe his imagination, on the variety of his amuſements

amuſements, on the pleaſing ſenſations which attend the gratification of the factitious paſſions; he alſo will find his capabilities fall infinitely beneath his deſires. It is theſe diſappointments which furniſh the ſubject of all the fond complaints which have been made on the futility of our purſuits, from the beginning of human exiſtence to the preſent day.

The ſlippered pantaloon of every age and country, agrees with the preacher, "that all is vanity and vexation of ſpirit," whilſt the eager youth ſtill ſets out in the fond purſuit of attaining that good, which has conſtantly eluded the graſp of others; and whilſt he is determined that no exertion ſhall be wanting to his ſucceſs, he ſacrifices his conſcience, his reputation, his health, his peace of mind, and often his life, before he is entirely convinced of his error. Beſide theſe evils which attend this fatal deception, it brings on us a total incapacity of employing thoſe means of happineſs which benevolent Nature has beſtowed on us. For ſuch is the texture of the mind, that when there is no object in view, which from its importance engroſſes the attention, it can be pleaſed and amuſed with any little trifle which occurs. And it is for theſe reaſons, that the gentle ſatisfaction taken together in their whole amount, are much more valuable than the higher enjoyments; even ſtupidity itſelf bids fairer for

happineſs,

happineſs, than great ſenſibility and ſtrong mental ſenſation.

When the humor of being prodigiouſly delighted, ſays a ſenſible writer, takes a ſtrong hold on the imagination, it our us for providing for, or acquieſcing in thoſe ſoothing engagements, the due variety and ſucceſſion of which, are the only things that ſupply a continual ſtream of happineſs.

As all perſons of a declining age feel the truth of Solomon's reflection, that their days have been ſpent in a fruitleſs vexation of the ſpirit; you will perhaps, Hortenſia, be ſomewhat ſurprized that the courſe of experience ſhould not enable them to furniſh ſuch hints as might determine youth to a more rational purſuit. But I muſt tell you, my friend, that there are few, very few, who make any uſe of their own experience in forming their judgment. The taſk of original thinking is too laborious for the puny powers of the majority, and their opinions are conſequently all formed upon truſt. Beſide, theſe good people having early loſt every reliſh for ſimplicity in their amuſements, they ſtill believe, that if there is ſuch a thing as happineſs in this ſtate of exiſtence, it muſt conſiſt in the being prodigiouſly delighted; and though they ſhould find little children very agreeably engaged with ſome common object which has preſented itſelf to their attention, they will put a ſudden period to their happineſs, by telling them, that if

they

they are very good and learn their book, &c. &c. they ſhall have a very fine baby, a fine coach the horſes, or ſome other toy equally adapted to inflame their imagination; and by the help of compariſon, to make them quite diſguſted with what before had filled their minds with ſatisfaction. Thus by a fooliſh profuſion of our favors, we deſtroy in the courſe of time, all that ſimplicity of taſte, which, if preſerved and cultivated, would afford a conſtant ſupply of pleaſing occupation; and thus our children inſenſibly loſe all that temperance, in which conſiſts the health both of body and ſoul.

A young lady well educated, ſays Fenelon, is always in a ſweet and moderate joy; there is no need of fine machines or ſights, theatrical pomps, or expences to recreate her: a little play, which ſhe may invent herſelf; a pretty inſtructive reading, a labour which is by herſelf freely undertaken; a walk, or a little innocent converſation, which relaxes the mind after hard labour, leaves a purer joy in her than that of the moſt charming muſic, or the moſt exquiſite and ſtudied diverſion; for though the plain pleaſures are leſs lively and ſenſible, they give a more even and durable joy than thoſe which move more ſtrongly the ſprings of the paſſions, and throw the ſoul into greater agitations.

Yes; Fenelon is in the right, if no unneceſſary reſtraints are put on children, nor lures thrown in the

the way of their imagination, they will always invent means to amuſe themſelves. Every trifle which preſents itſelf will afford ſatisfaction; and they will retain through life the vaſt privilege of being eaſily pleaſed.

Whilſt we are indulging thoſe we love, we undoubtedly partake of the pleaſures we beſtow; and it is on a principle of ſelf gratification, and on a miſtaken notion, that we are encreaſing the affection of children towards us, that we practiſe on their imagination by loading them with ſuperfluous toys, and by ſetting forth in the moſt lively colours thoſe objects that are beſt adapted to inflame their curioſity, and produce an eager emotion in their minds. Hence the return of birth days, and the viſits of thoſe, who think it neceſſary to ſhew a liberality to their little friends, are expected with a ſolicitude which leaves no room for preſent ſatisfaction; hence promiſed ſcenes of amuſement are offered, and the young mind which ſhould be kept in a ſtate of perfect tranquillity, experiences by anticipation, thoſe lively agitations which baniſh ſleep from the eye, and which are the painful attendants on the moſt turbulent of our paſſions. Thus the ſpirits, from being frequently diſcompoſed, acquire habits of being eaſily thrown into tumult; and vain are the attemps of the adult to rectify thoſe diſorders which are ſown in the boſom of the child.

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The pleaſures of hope, ſo much celebrated by our ſpecies, as the balſam of our woe, and the great ſource of our happineſs, in my opinion, owes all its excellence to being contraſted with a ſtate of deſpair, and the rank it holds in our eſteem, from our ignorance. Yet ſo univerſal is error on this particular, that the attentive eye of philoſophy does not always eſcape the deception.

That happineſs only exiſts in hope, is the maxim of the penetrating Helvetius; and all his rules of education are conſequently grounded on this hypotheſis. But from the invincible power of early impreſſions, the ſagacity of Helvetius muſt have diſcovered this truth, that hope of what is diſtant, always ſpeaks a preſent want; and that want and happineſs can never unite. But though the moderns appear to be totally blind to this truth, yet the ſtoicks were always in poſſeſſion of it, and their rules for obtaining wiſdom, all tend to this one point of maintaining ſuch a ſovereignty over the mind and its deſires, as ſhould enable it to draw its happineſs from the preſent moment, and to exert its powers on preſent objects.

Their man of wiſdom is always alive to the action which is doing, and his attention fixed on the paſſing ſcene. And were all our habits adapted to this end, were we never accuſtomed to think any more of the future, than what an examination into conſequences rendered neceſſary, our facility

in acquiring knowledge would be encreaſed, our happineſs would become real and conſtant, inſtead of fleeting and viſionary, our countenances would change from the gloomy appearance of care and abſtracted attention, to the ſmiles of eaſe and ſatisfaction; and all our capabilities of rendering ourſelves uſeful, would be enlarged.

This condition of the mind, ſo important to our happineſs, would be in the poſſeſſion of all men, was the turn of their education adapted to its attainment. The mind naturally faſtens on preſent objects, and it is only from being continually called off to intereſting proſpects of futurity, that ſhe acquires a habit of abſenting herſelf from every thing which is not adapted from its inviting qualities to command her attention. It ought to be the particular care of parents and tutors, to ſtrengthen and confirm this natural propenſity of the mind, ſo favourable to virtue and happineſs. And when it is deſigned to give children more than an ordinary gratification, it ſhould be contrived in ſuch a manner as to come ſuddenly upon them; and ſtated periods for the beſtowing preſents or indulgencies, ought to be avoided with a care which ſhould fruſtrate all the enquiries of ſolicitude, or any calculations drawn from experience.

In the mind of man, Hortenſia, we may obſerve propenſities which are of ſuch oppoſite qualities,

that the inattentive obſerver would be apt to accuſe Nature of caprice in departing from ſimplicity, in order to produce confuſion. But far different are the concluſions of the philoſopher. He acknowledges the neceſſity for every ſeeming contrariety. He perceives, that if the force and power which habits acquire over the mind were leſs ſtrong, virtue would be cultivated without ſucceſs, and education be of no avail. He allows that there is wiſdom in limiting the empire of habit, by the appetites of curioſity and the love of novelty. And he diſcovers that Nature, in ſowing the ſeeds of ſuch diſcordant paſſions, and planting in the human mind ſuch oppoſite inclinations, left it to the care of experience to perfect her work by cultivation, and by fixing the degrees of either as beſt ſuits the great end and purpoſe of education.

When the mind draws ſatisfaction from the object with which it is engaged, it is ſo pleaſed with its ſituation that it is apt to quarrel with every croſs incident which intervenes; to become ruffled with every interruption; and to fancy that happineſs is alone annexed to the preſent mode of its enjoyment.

This natural propenſity of the mind will be greatly confirmed and encreaſed by thoſe habits which have been preſcribed as neceſſary means of happineſs. It will therefore be proper often to interrupt our

pupils when they are the moſt buſily engaged with one object or purſuit, and to ſet them on another which may be quite contrary in its nature and tendency. Thus the mind will attain the habit of turning itſelf eaſily from object to object; and will find by experience, that ſatisfaction is not neceſſarily attached to particulars, but may be found in every part of that endleſs variety which the modes of regular life ſet forth for the labor and amuſement of man.

LETTER IX.

On the Vice of Lying—Religion.

IF you want examples, Hortenſia, to prove to you the truth of my hypotheſis, that the character of our ſpecies is formed from the influence of education, caſt your eye on the different ranks of men who compoſe the large body of ſociety, and you will find that their vices and virtues differ in a great meaſure from each other, according to the different ſtile in which they have been educated.

A lie, to a man whoſe education has partaken of thoſe refinements which diſtinguiſh honor from common honeſty, is a debaſement of conduct, to which no exigence of circumſtances can compel him to ſtoop. And even among thoſe who entertain the groſſeſt ideas of honor, deceit is ſeldom uſed but for the purpoſe of carrying ſome great point of profit or pleaſure; whereas among the common people, the vice of lying is prevalent to ſuch a degree, as to deſtroy in a great meaſure that confidence which is neceſſary to the purpoſes of ſocial life. The obvious ill conſequences which attend lying, and its corruptive powers over the mind, have occaſioned it to be the peculiar object of attention in every mode

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of regular education: but among the variety of rules which have been given for inſtilling thoſe ſentiments into youth, and inducing thoſe habits proper to inſure the virtue of integrity, there are many to be found which bid fair to operate directly contrary to the propoſed end.

As I have a great opinion of the power of early impreſſions, I cannot agree with Rouſſeau in the notion, that it is right to keep children in ignorance on the ſubject of truth and falſehood. I ſhould, on the contrary, be very particular in the explaining to them the nature of this moral difference. I ſhould endeavour to make them feel forcibly, the obligation of obſerving the ſtrict rules of veracity, by ſuch reflections as were beſt adapted to convince them of the value of this virtue, and the degradation of character which muſt attend every departure from it. As the innocence of young minds can only be preſerved by putting every temptation out of their way, I ſhould be careful not to act the ſatanical part, and to be at once the ſeducer and the puniſher. Inſtead of awakening the ſtrong feelings of terror in my pupil's mind, and acting the part of an inquiſitor with an implement of diſcipline in my hand, to puniſh my little culprit for confeſſions I had cruelly extorted from him, I ſhould carefully avoid putting queſtions on any paſt action, which it was known that I regarded as cenſurable.

For whenever faults were committed which deſerved to be reprehended or puniſhed, I ſhould take care to be informed of them by thoſe who had no intereſt to conceal the truth. Nor ſhould I vainly expect that fortitude from an infant, which is ſeldom to be found in adults.

By a conduct thus cautious, habits of falſehood would be avoided, and the mind preſerved from that illiberality of ſentiment, which muſt ever attend the ſubjection to a tyranny ſo cruel and unjuſt, as the neceſſity of becoming one's own accuſer.

In order to encourage children in all caſes to ſpeak the truth, and that they may acquire a full confidence in the friendly diſpoſition of their parents and tutors towards them, ſome have adviſed withholding every ſpecies of puniſhment whenever the truth was voluntarily confeſſed without any reſerve. This would be a very proper method to purſue, if the minds of children were fraught with the innocence of the dove, without any alloy of the cunning of the ſerpent; but they are ſufficiently alive to the gratification of purſuing freely every fancy of the imagination, to foil the tutor on ſuch a plan of conduct: for perceiving that they could always eſcape with impunity whenever they made a free confeſſion of their fault, they would make little ſcruple of applying in this eaſy manner for abſolution, and their treſ-

paſſes

paſſes would daily encreaſe both in their number and in their degree of culpability. Some advantages children ought undoubtedly to gain for an honeſt ingenuous conduct: yet there is no neceſſity that theſe ſhould amount to a total impunity; it would be ſufficient if the harſhneſs they experienced, were to be leſſened in proportion to the degree of frankneſs they had ſhewn.

There is a kind of deceit, which the natural guile of children ſtrongly inclines them to commit. This is the promiſing for a preſent advantage, what they never intend to perform. Rouſſeau, who will not allow that children have any evil propenſities but what they gain from education, makes a great many, I think, unmeaning diſtinctions, to prove that they do not know what they are about when they make engagements, and therefore they cannot be ſaid to deceive or tell a lie when they are ſo doing. But this is not the caſe; children will frequently promiſe, with an intention to deceive; and this kind of deceit ought never to go unpuniſhed. The performance of the engagement, however difficult, ought to be inſiſted on. Means ſhould be taken to excite in them the painful ſenſe of ſhame; and whenever the engagement was of a kind which could not be reaſonably fulfilled, they ſhould be obliged to part with ſomething on which they ſet a value, in order to make

up, as it might be pretended, for the non performance of promiſe.

As we are all fond of receiving ſtrong impreſſions, every narrator is apt to depart from the ſtrict line of truth, in order to raiſe thoſe feelings in his auditors which will command their attention; and indeed, in young perſons, the pleaſure of giving and receiving ſurprize, may be ſaid to be reciprocal. Hence children, who are very fond of telling ſtories, become adepts in the arts of invention and exaggeration; in which ſpecies of falſehood they are too often encouraged and even applauded.

Thus the principle of veracity daily grows weaker and weaker, habits of falſehood are acquired, and the ſtory-teller, who firſt lies only to amuſe, at legth repeats the tranſgreſſion whenever it may ſerve his turn. Let not a blind parental partiality then, or the pleaſure of ſeeing our pupils admired for their wit and invention, lead us to neglect our duty on this ſubject. Let us carefully watch every intentional deviation from a ſtrict veracity, and check the riſing vanity by a ſevere reprehenſion. Let us point out in the examples both of dead and living characters, the honor and advantages which attend the man of known truth; and ſhould we be ſo unfortunate as to contend with habits already acquired, let us oppoſe their influence, and induce the neceſſity for a change

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of conduct by preſerving an unremitted appearance of incredulity to every fact related by thoſe we wiſh to reform.

The tender minds of children, Hortenſia, are not adapted to the entertainment of abſtracted ideas, and conſequently very little fit for the contemplation of religious ſubjects. How few indeed, are the number of adults, who have ſufficient ſoundneſs of underſtanding, and ſtrength of intellect, to ſtudy theology with good effect. It is for theſe reaſons that we form our faith by the dictates of authority, and that contemplation which from its tranſcendant ſublimity has above all others a tendency to elevate the mind and to warm and determine its ſentiments, inſtead of raiſing man to the higheſt perfection of his nature, often ſinks him beneath it.

Bigotry, enthuſiaſm, and infidelity, are the three diviſions under which we may claſs the great majority of ſociety; but think not, Hortenſia, that the relation in which we ſtand to our Creator, is naturally ſo much above our apprehenſion. No; this is a defect which, like moſt others, we derive from education. The infidel either totally neglects cultivating the mind of his offspring on this ſubject, or tinctures it with an incurable ſcepticiſm; whilſt the believer taking an advantage of the credulity of infancy, fetters it with prejudices, which no after reflection will thoroughly

roughly eraſe. It is true, that the ſuperſtitious child will often, when he arrives at manhood, adopt the creed of the infidel, and the licence of the profligate; but this proceeds from levity, and is the diſtaſte of former reſtraint, not the concluſions which attend deep thought and candid enquiry.

It is alſo true, that there are ſome characters in all ages, who have ſoared above every diſadvantage which reaſon has to contend with in its human intercourſe. But theſe are prodigies of wiſdom, ſent into the world to limit the empire of error, and not as ſubjects to direct our enquiries, or extend our knowledge on the effects and influence of education.

But as theology is a ſubject too ſublime and myſterious for the contemplation of the uncultivated mind, are we to breed up our children in a total ignorance of our faith, and a total inattention to the duties of religion? by no means. Habit is too neceſſary for every purpoſe we would wiſh to effect in human conduct, to be neglected in this important particular. Let us give much of habit and principle, but very little of doctrine. Let infants be taught to ſupplicate the throne of grace, the moment they are able to return thanks for the important gift of ſpeech, which beſtows on us, all our pre-eminence. But let their prayers be ſimple and ſhort. The Lord's prayer repeated twice

twice a day, on mornings and evenings, is fully ſufficient during the period of infancy and childhood. And as we are not to be heard for our much ſpeaking even in a more advanced ſtate of youth, I would not inſiſt on the repeating more prayers than the pater-noſter, and the confeſſion of ſins; for I am of opinion, that there are no habits which can be more conducive to a religious ſtate of mind, than the two following, viz. the habit of relying on divine goodneſs for the beſtowing on us every favour, which in the total amount of things, will be the moſt conducive to our happineſs, and the habit of an entire ſubmiſſion of our deſires to the will of the deity.

When children have been taught to read a ſelection of thoſe pſalms which are the ſimpleſt in their compoſition, and convey, in the eaſieſt manner to be apprehended, ideas of the power and benevolence of God, a choice of hymns may be ſelected on the ſame principle, and ſome plain practical moral ſermons may alſo form part of their religious ſtudy; but the Bible and New Teſtament I would totally exclude. I think I ſee you ſtart, Hortenſia, at this heterodox notion; but conſtant as has been the practice of the reformed churches of putting the ſacred writings into the hands of children, and ignorant adults, I look upon it to be a great miſtake in point of prudence, and that it has been the grand ſource both of infidelity

fidelity and fanaticiſm. For as the underſtanding of the ſcriptures in the preſent day depends on a great extent of critical knowledge and obſervation, they can ſeldom be underſtood by the unlearned; and though no prohibitions ought to ſhut up the fountain of our faith from the inſpection of the curious and intelligent, it is undoubtedly a moſt prepoſterous conduct to make it part of the devotional exerciſes of the illiterate, and of thoſe whoſe tender years and confined knowledge unfits them for the taſk of deep and critical reflection.

Among thoſe generals which are diſtinguiſhed by the appellation of public ſentiment, I know none, Hortenſia, which more fully manifeſts the weakneſs, or the indolence of human reaſon, than the manner in which the duties of the ſabbath are underſtood and practiſed. The commandment obviouſly ſpeaks a benevolent intent, to emancipate from hard labour for one day in the week, thoſe of the brute creation, and thoſe of the human, who were tied by the bonds of ſlavery to the ſervice of man. In this ſenſe alone it was taken and obſerved by the Jews, till their return from the Babyloniſh captivity, when, in order to prevent their falling again into that idolatry which had brought on their ruin and ſubjection, it was appointed that they ſhould aſſemble together on every return of the ſabbath, to be inſtructed in the know-

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ledge of their faith; for it was juſtly thought, that the want of inſtruction had ſubjected them to the ſnares of paganiſm. The event proved the wiſdom of the policy; for thoſe tribes who returned to Jeruſalem, never after relapſed into idolatry; and the Chriſtian churches very properly adopted this part of the Jewiſh diſcipline, by ſetting apart one day in the week, for the public inſtruction, and devotional ſervice of the people. The Jews, who, like all ancient nations, were very ſuperſtitious, preſerved the ſanctity of this day with ſuch ſcrupulous exactneſs, that the Romans found means to make an eaſy conqueſt by timing their attacks on them on the ſabbath, when they were ſure to meet with no oppoſition. As no miracle intervened to ſave the Jews from the conſequence of their inactivity, good ſenſe ought to have dictated wiſer counſels; but they continued in their blind obſtinacy, and were reprehended by the Meſſiah for neglecting to perform neceſſary and uſeful acts on the ſabbath.

It might have been imagined, that the greater lights of the Chriſtian world would have enabled them to have ſteered clear of the errors of Judaiſm, and that in the obſervance of the Sunday, they would have hit upon that mean, which at once complied with the benevolent dictates of the commandment, and with the policy of the Jews.

But this is ſo far from being the caſe, that the manner

manner in which Sunday has been kept by the Chriſtians, is at leaſt productive of as much miſchief as good. The diſcipline of ſeveral of the reformed churches, is in a ſtile of preciſeneſs, which does not admit of any innocent amuſement, though it be at the ſame time uſeful. Therefore, the injunction, "thou ſhalt do no manner of work," which appears to be particularly applied to taſks of labour, is conſtrued with a ſtrictneſs which conſigns over the illiterate world to the worſt of all evils, the influence of idleneſs. The catholic church, as they call themſelves, admit of thoſe diſſipations which at all times diſgrace and injure ſociety; yet ſo wonderfully are we attached to our prejudices, that the catholic, who enters into every ſcene of diſſipation after the ſhort ſervice of the day is over, would be greatly ſhocked to perceive a piece of needle-work taken up, as a little recreation, after the ſame attention to duty had been obſerved. Whilſt the good proteſtant, defying all the temptations of Satan, will not tranſgreſs in either of theſe ways; but flying in the face of the commandment, puts his horſes to the yoke, and depriving his ſervants of their holiday, goes in ſtate to viſit his neighbours; and in all probability to ſpread ſome tale of ſcandal through the whole circle of his acquaintance.

Thus viſits are given and received, journies undertaken, and entertainments made and returned,

turned, till by common uſage and aſſent, the benevolent purpoſe of the commandment is entirely loſt. Sunday ſhines no holiday to the miſerable brutes; nor is the policy of the Jews well preſerved, for the public devotion of the day always gives way to any intervening object of pleaſure. Indeed, ſo miſerably have we perverted every rational conſtruction of the commandment, and miſapplied the policy of its practice, that the ſabbath day is ſuch a day of ſevere labour to our horſes, that many of them fall a ſacrifice to the rigor of their taſks; and idleneſs, with every ſpecies of debauchery, reign with more ungovernable ſway over the morals of ſociety on the holy ſabbath, than on any other day in the week.

Now, as it would be my care to accuſtom my pupils to uſe their reaſon in the practice of duties, I ſhould point out a very different way of paying obedience to the fourth commandment, than what the common practice ſets forth. I ſhould habituate them to ſpend the time that was unoccupied in public and private devotion, in domeſtic buſineſs; in reading innocent and improving books; and when the mind did not ſuit with this employment, rather than admit of idleneſs, a little uſeful needle-work ſhould fill up the leiſure of the morning hour. The afternoons ſhould in general be devoted to muſic; for this art can never be ſo properly employed, as in lifting the mind by

the power of harmony to the contemplation of deity.

As part of the day, when health will permit, ought always to be ſpent by adults in public acts of devotion, children ſhould be ſometimes carried to church; but leſt they ſhould regard the confinement during the whole ſervice as a penance, I would not inſiſt on their attendance as a weekly taſk, but carry them occaſionally as a matter of favor and reward for well doing.

The curioſity of children will naturally lead them to aſk queſtions on that part of the doctrine which had not been familiarized to them by daily inſtruction. On ſuch an occaſion, Rouſſeau's rules ought to be followed. Silence ſhould be obtained by authority, and the ambition of children for literary endowments excited by obſervations on their preſent inſufficiency; and aſſurances, that time, and the progreſs of ſtudy, would improve their underſtanding and knowledge to their utmoſt wiſhes.

LETTER

LETTER X.

Severity in the Education of Children, improper—Indiſcriminate Indulgence cenſured.

THE precept contained in the old adage, Hortenſia, that if you ſpare the rod, you ſpoil the child, was generally complied with, and implicitly obſerved, by our anceſtors. This implement of diſcipline, once uſed in official pomp, as the inſignia of conſular dignity, was in the laſt age diſplayed as the enſign of pedagogue authority; and the whole art of education was ſuppoſed to lie in the whipping often, and whipping with ſeverity. Parental tenderneſs gave way to the authority of precept. The tears of the innocent ſup pliantflowed in vain. His helpleſs ſtate, inſtead of exciting compaſſion, ſeemed to provoke injury. Feeling was ſubdued by principle; and children, with an unrelenting hand, were to be ſcourged into genius, memory, and every other virtue and accompliſhment regarded as uſeful or ornamental in man.

Thus, by the pious deſire of preventing future evil, and producing future good, our ſpecies were robbed of advantages which were never to re-

turn, and were made to feel all the poignancy of ſorrow at that period of life, which is naturally exempted from care. Nor did the miſchief end with this unneceſſary privation of good; for when the frame of the mind is at an early period of life often diſturbed and violently ſhaken by rigorous ſenſations, a perpetual irritation is produced, tranquillity gives place to reſtleſsneſs, the temper becomes fretful and impatient, and the ſpirits are thrown into diſorder by every thwarting incident which occurs.

On the contrary, when during the ſtate of infancy the mind is free from all painful commotion, it acquires a firmneſs and ſtability which is not eaſily ſhaken. Thus adults, who in their childhood have been tenderly and affectionately treated, commonly meet ſorrow with conſtancy; but this is ſeldom, or perhaps never, the caſe with ſenſible minds who have experienced a contrary uſage.

The humane Fenelon cautions parents not to be deceived by the words of a text, which taken in a literal ſenſe, keeps the rod uplifted over the heads of children; and he aſſerts, that the wiſe man did not oppoſe a gentle and patient education, but only that weak and inconſiderate indulgence which flatters the paſſions of children. Mr. Locke has taken a great deal of pains to ſhow the inefficacy, the ill tendency, and the cruelty

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of the rigorous plan. Rouſſeau, Genlis, and all the later writers of eminence, who have treated on education, have either totally excluded the rod, or kept it for the puniſhment of hardened obſtinacy and diſobedience; and ſuch has been the force of truth, ſupported by argument and eloquence, that ſeverity is in general excluded from every mode of private education.

But it is not merely Solomon's advice of not ſparing the rod, which has deluded parents into an improper conduct towards their children; his ſaying, that "a father who plays with his child, ſhall afterwards weep," introduced ſuch an inflexible ſtiffneſs into parental carriage, as nipped affection in its bud. No returns were made to latent tenderneſs, ſo well concealed under the garb of auſterity. No confidence was given, where no indulgence was ſhewn. Freedom, from the emancipation of an imperious tyranny, was the ſentiment which prevailed in the boſom of every child; and thence ſprung the general opinion, that love deſcends, but never aſcends.

The cauſe of this complaint, like moſt others which we charge on Nature, originates with ourſelves; for ſuch are the tender prejudices which we can faſten on the young mind, ſo invaluable are the bleſſings we can beſtow on our children, that had we judgment and virtue enough only to do our duty by them, we ſhould, for the moſt part, ſe-

cure a return of affection, which neither time nor circumſtances could ſhake; and whenever parents feel what they call the ingratitude of their children, they may commonly look for the cauſe of their vexation in their own negligence and errors. But let not the fond doating credulous parent conceive, that by giving the reins to ignorance and inexperience, he is laying up in ſtore for himſelf, thoſe bleſſings which flow from filial piety. No; according to our cultivation, ſuch will be our harveſt. Improper habits can never fail to give ſtrength to appetite, and ſtimulus to temptation. The untutored, and the undiſciplined mind, is totally incapacitated for ſelf government; violent inclinations muſt be gratified even by violent means, and parents, though willing and able to ſupply the deſires of a childiſh fancy, may be found to ſtand in the way of enjoyments, adapted to the paſſions and the purſuits of adults. To prevent the pernicious attempts of gaining the love of children by an improper indulgence, let parents conſider, that children never love, where they do not eſteem; and as they become ſoon ſenſible of their dependant ſtate, when they are ſuffered to play the part of the tyrant, they always ſuppoſe, that the privilege proceeds from ſome deficiency of underſtanding in thoſe who have a natural power over them; and as ſatisfaction accompanies order and regularity, and happineſs is peculiarly annexed to

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mental tranquillity, a child, when under due government, feels theſe advantages, and looks up with reſpect and gratitude to the author of its felicity.

Extremes, Hortenſia, almoſt always produce ſimilar conſequences; and it is obſervable, that when the deſires of the mind meet with uninterrupted gratification, caprice and impatience take poſſeſſion. It quarrels with every thing which is poſſible to be enjoyed, and ſeeks for objects out of the limits of human poſſeſſion. You may ſhew my daughter every moveable in the houſe, ſaid a great lady to the governante, becauſe if ſhe breaks them, I can get more; but do not carry her to the window, for ſhould ſhe cry for the moon, we cannot procure it.

Would you know the moſt infallible way, ſays Rouſſeau, to make your child miſerable, it is to accuſtom him to obtain every thing he deſires; for thoſe deſires ſtill encreaſing from the facility of acquiſition, your incapacity muſt ſooner or later oblige you to the neceſſity of a refuſal; and that refuſal, ſo new and uncommon, will give him more trouble than even the want of that which he deſires. The ſenſe of an imaginary injuſtice will ſour his diſpoſition; he will begin to hate every body; and without ever thinking himſelf obliged by their complaiſance, be enraged at their contradiction.

There is no neceſſity, Hortenſia, to introduce the ſtrong painting of Rouſſeau, to give you an idea of the frowardneſs of a humoured child, and the trouble he gives to all about him; every body is ſometime or another a ſpectator of ſcenes which fill with diſguſt the unprejudiced mind. Yet the doating parent, forgetting former reflections, conceives, that every good natured perſon muſt be equally faſcinated as himſelf with the charms of his dear little baby.

Thus changing our ſentiments with our ſituation, and accuſing all thoſe who differ from us with moroſeneſs and the want of experience, too many of us continue to preſerve that conduct towards our children, which muſt neceſſarily incapacitate them for philoſophic excellence, or even for the acquiring thoſe independent virtues which are neceſſary to the ſupport of a fair and honeſt character. Children, from being accuſtomed to ſee every thing give way to them when young, are little able to bear with patience and dignity, that reſiſtance to their will, which they muſt experience on entering into the world; their vanity and pride will be perpetually mortified, and their ungovernable deſires will meet with continual diſappointments.

In this trying ſituation, the temerity of bold tempers will lead them to tranſgreſs all the laws of prudence, and to forfeit every obligation which

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ſtands in the way of happineſs; whilſt more timid natures will endeavour to attain the ſame end by becoming baſe, ſervile, treacherous and deceitful.

LETTER XI.

Neceſſary Qualities in a Tutor—Envy—Pride—Vanity—Puniſhment.

WHEN the taſk of education is given up by parents, and children are to be put into other hands, it is common in the choice of a tutor to look for no other qualities than thoſe of learning and integrity.

It muſt be owned, Hortenſia, that learning and integrity are no ordinary endowments; and it were well if every one who undertook the important taſk of cultivating the human mind, had no deficiencies in either of theſe qualities; but if learning is not united to judgment, penetration, and ſagacity, it becomes a dead letter, or a magazine of opinions, from which error is oftener produced than truth. Neither are the virtues of the underſtanding, the only neceſſary qualities in the character of a tutor; they muſt be accompanied with the virtues of the heart, or the education of the pupil will be very incomplete.

The tutor fit to raiſe man to that high degree of excellence of which his nature is capable, muſt himſelf partake of the excellence he beſtows. His

His learning muſt be accompanied with modeſty, his wiſdom with gaiety, his ſagacity muſt have a keeneſs which can penetrate through the veil of prejudice, and attain to the high ſuperiority of original thinking; and the virtues of his mind muſt be accompanied with that tenderneſs of feeling which produces the moſt valuable of all excellencies, an unconfined benevolence.

A tutor who comes under this deſcription, will undoubtedly perceive the neceſſity of laying aſide the uſual method of rouſing virtue by the principle of pride. He will avoid the making inviduous compariſons and diſtinctions, or the beſtowing exceſſive praiſes on ſome particular perſon, in order to point him out to the pupil as an object of emulation, and conſequently as an object of envy.

It is by ſuch injudicious methods, that the moſt baneful of all the paſſions is nouriſhed in the young mind, till it encreaſes to a luxuriance which taints the whole character. And it is thus, that the affection between brethren, which ought to be particularly cheriſhed by thoſe who have the care of youth, is gradually weakened, and at length, too often extinguiſhed. Genlis, in her letters on education, points out in the following ſcene, the propriety of guarding the avenues of the heart from the intruſion of envy. The mother of Adelaide and Theodore is bled, and reduced almoſt to death from the loſs of blood, occaſioned by her

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ſon's having accidentally looſened the bandage from her arm. The daughter faints away at the ſight of her mother's condition. In the midſt of the endearments which followed the recovery of mother and daughter, the father caſts his eyes upon Theodore, and diſcovering in his countenance the ſtrong agitations of his mind, dexterouſly turned the attention of the mother towards him. She affected to conſider his confuſion as the effects of his tenderneſs, and Theodore in his turn, experienced thoſe endearments, which he believed he ſhould have been deprived of from this accident, and from his not having ſhown the ſame ſymptoms of affection as his ſiſter. After ſome praiſes were beſtowed on him for his ſenſibility, he became perfectly tranquil, and joined his endeavours with thoſe of the company to reſtore gaiety to his ſiſter; his heart, writes the father when deſcribing this ſcene, till then ſo calm and innocent, received at that moment the firſt, the fatal impreſſion of envy and jealouſy. He was no longer the ſame perſon; injuſtice, perhaps diſſimulation, had juſt entered into his mind, and had they not been quickly baniſhed they would have taken the deepeſt root.

I know, Hortenſia, that the principles of every paſſion and appetite lie latent in the human character: but I believe that their growth and exceſſes depend entirely on education. It is true, that

that pride muſt ſometimes be called into our aſſiſtance to effect ſome of the beſt purpoſes on the human mind; but the indiſcriminate uſe which is made of it, inſtead of furthering the growth of virtue, undermines its principles. Moſt children have a ſufficient docility in their nature to be induced to follow good habits by example and precept; and when good habits are once acquired, they recommend themſelves by the felicity they beſtow. Indeed, you cannot make a dunce, i. e. a perſon without memory and without ſenſibility, learned, or in every ſenſe accompliſhed; but neither can you attain this purpoſe by ill uſage, or by raiſing deſires, which a natural impotence forbids to be gratified. If you cannot then give the diſtinctions of genius to your child, be content with making him good and happy; and do not ſo miſerably abuſe your power, as to barter theſe ſolid advantages for the views of ambition.

It muſt be confeſſed by all moraliſts, that the turbulent paſſion of pride is an impenetrable bar to the attainment of true virtue. But vanity, a quality which originates from pride, and is better adapted to little minds, will be found to lead to vice. Pride, when properly diſtinguiſhed, from vanity, is an overweening conceit of ourſelves, ariſing from the real or fancied poſſeſſion, either of ſome high qualities of mind or body, or of ſome of the goods of fortune; whereas vanity is fed by

the opinion of others, flattery acquires an unbounded power over it; it becomes the dupe and the inſtrument of the illicit views of the flatterer; and as it is often found defective in thoſe advantages it affects to poſſeſs, it is always accompanied with the paſſion of envy, and with thoſe reſtleſs ſenſations which attend an impotent ambition.

If this is not an exaggerated picture, would not one imagine that education would bend its cares to the eradicating vanity from the mind of youth? But this is ſo much the reverſe, that it is cultivated with aſſiduity. "The coverings of our body," ſays Mr. Locke, "which are for modeſty, warmth, and defence, are by the folly or vice of parents made matters of vanity or emulation. A child is ſet a longing after a new ſuit, for the finery of it; and when the little girl is tricked out in her new gown and commode, how can her mother do leſs than teach her to admire herſelf by calling her, "her little queen," and "her princeſs." Thus the little ones are taught to be proud of their clothes, before they can put them on. And why ſhould they not continue to value themſelves for this outſide faſhionableneſs of the taylor or tire woman, when their parents have ſo early inſtructed them to do it."

Madame Genlis is ſo guarded againſt the foſtering vanity in children, as to proſcribe all commendation, but what is given to their modeſty; but admitting

admitting, that it may be ſometimes proper to encourage the ſolid virtues by praiſe, we ought to be very cautious in the manner of uſing it. We ſhould neither beſtow it on wit, nor beauty, nor perſonal accompliſhments; and never let it paſs the bounds of moderation; for all exceſſive commendation corrupts the mind, and renders its deſires on this article inſatiable.

But are children ſo docile, you will ſay, as to be led by example and precept, to follow all the rules of rational conduct? Children, if properly trained from their birth, are commonly more docile than they are believed to be; but grant that correction is often neceſſary to reſtrain the levity of youthful ſpirits, it is not that kind which makes its way to the mind through the ſufferings of the body. A confinement made more ſlight and rigorous according to the nature of the offence, a reſtriction from favourite amuſements or favourite viands, the ſilence and affected neglect of thoſe to whoſe care you entruſt your pupil during this ſtate of penance, would make a much deeper impreſſion on his mind, than the ſmart of a corporal puniſhment. As a ſuccedaneum for corporal puniſhment ſome have followed the cuſtom of putting various marks on the little offenders, thus to point them out to their brethren and play fellows, as objects of contempt and ridicule. Such practices are much uſed in girls ſchools; but as they only

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ſerve to foſter malignity, and blunt the feelings of ſhame, they ought to be reprobated yet more than the rod; for when the mind has once loſt its ſenſibility, there is no acting upon it with any ſucceſs.

When children, by an improper treatment in infancy, become hardened in obſtinacy, it may be very neceſſary to uſe corporal puniſhment; but this ought to be done with a delicacy, which ſhould at once impreſs on the mind of the offender the advantage of character, and the friendly ſentiments of the perſon by whom he is thus puniſhed. Corporal puniſhment, ſays Mr. Locke, ought never to be undertaken, without being purſued in ſuch a manner as ſhall effect the intended purpoſe; for in ſuch a conteſt, ſhould the child be once ſuffered to carry his point, he is loſt for ever. For this, and for other reaſons, it may be better for parents to give up this diſagreeable taſk to others, provided ſervants are not employed in it. And though as before obſerved, children ought to be impreſſed with the idea, that it is from a principle of duty and affection that their parents puniſh them, yet the cuſtom which formerly prevailed of obliging them, when even under the ſmart of correction, to go down on their knees, and thank their correctors, is a ſpecies of tyranny which muſt tend to debaſe the mind, and to teach it the vices of deceit and diſſimulation.

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I have heard a ſtory of this kind, Hortenſia, which from its cataſtrophe, drew tears into my eyes, and which the tenderneſs of your diſpoſition will make you regard as intereſting. A child, who by the force of diſcipline had been made to belie her ſentiments, and to return thanks for her mortifications, had a medicine adminiſtered to her; and after every bitter ſip ſhe made a curteſy, and called out as ſhe had been taught, "I thank you for my good ſtuff." Unfortunately there was a miſtake in the medicine; and the child, after having ſuffered great miſery during the night, died the next morning, to the inconſolable grief of her parents, whoſe tender ſorrow was much heightened at the recollection of the thanks which had been extorted for the draught of death.

LETTER

LETTER XII.

Benevolence.

THE virtue of benevolence, Hortenſia, is of ſo comprehenſive a nature, that it contains the principle of every moral duty. It is true, there are ſome qualities of the heart, which we paſs on ourſelves and others for the virtue of benevolence; but they will be found on examination to want that which conſtitutes the very eſſence of this attribute. A great prince makes large donations to particular perſons; he is called benevolent; but in the exerciſe of this benevolence, he abuſes his truſt; he lays heavy burdens on the people for theſe donations; and thus the opulence of the few is purchaſed with the poverty of the many. A rich man, under the notion of liberality, becomes prodigally laviſh of treaſures, which, if well managed, would be the permanent ſource of enjoyment to himſelf, and to thouſands of other beings; but as he is the dupe of all who deal with him, he ſpends what is juſtly his own like a fool; then imitating the knave, he either re-eſtabliſhes his affairs by public robbery, or dies inſolvent, and defrauds his creditors.

Dona-

Donations, and other acts of kindneſs, are in general done in ſo partial a manner, and with ſo little judgment, that they ſeldom confer good on any being, without occaſioning as much or more evil to others. The moſt important of all duties, ſays Rouſſeau, is not to do injury to any one. Who is there that does not do good? All the world, even the vicious man, does good to one party or another: he will often make one party happy at the expence of making others miſerable. Hence ariſe all our calamities. Oh how much good muſt that man neceſſarily do his fellow creatures, who never did any of them harm.

Though we ſhould not confine benevolence merely to the not doing injury, yet it is certain that benevolence and injury are oppoſites, which can never unite; and if ſtrict equity does in ſome points of view bear a diſtinction from benevolence, yet the diſtinction can only be ſeen in the inferior and ſuperior degrees of the ſame virtue.

It has ever been the diſtinguiſhing mark of revelation, that its injunctions are to do good to others, and to bear injuries with patience. And experience, by the happineſs annexed to a benevolent conduct, convinces the unprejudiced mind of the truths contained in the precepts of the goſpel; for we never enjoy more mental felicity, than in the exerciſe of the benign affections; and could we by habit and cultivation give ſuch a

prevalence to the paſſion of benevolence, as to render all our inclinations ſubordinate to it, we might almoſt bid defiance to fortune, and vaunt the independence of ſtoiciſm.

But if the obſervations of the moraliſt are juſt, why does not education bend her whole care to produce a fruit thus advantageous to the poſſeſſor, and which when multiplied in private characters, would operate ſtrongly in favour of public happineſs.

The anſwer to this queſtion is, that none can be acquainted with the happineſs annexed to a truly benevolent mind, who is not in the poſſeſſion of it. We are all partially good, and ſome are more extenſively ſo than others; but there are few, very few of the ſons of men, who are benevolent.

Thoſe precepts of the goſpel, which are adapted to the cultivation of this virtue, have ever been looked upon ſo difficult in practice, as in common to be totally diſregarded. Revenge, which is only agreeable as it ſerves to allay the painful ſenſations of anger, is ſtill ſought after as the ſweeteſt of all mental dainties. Envy, a paſſion nearly allied to revenge, and which owes its gratification to the ſame cauſe, infects every boſom with more or leſs of its malignancy, and univerſally breaks out into injuries, when it can be done with ſafety to reputation. Whilſt Pride, the root of theſe paſſions, with

with its offspring, Vanity, gives birth to a variety of affections, hoſtile to the principle of benevolence, and which tend to render us capricious and partial in the favours we beſtow.

The reaſon then, that education is found ſo deficient in producing benevolence is, that precept, without example, is of no uſe in the cultivation of this cardinal virtue. It is example only which can fire the mind to an emulation of diſintereſted actions, which can call its attention to diſtreſſes without itſelf; and by a retroſpect of its own capabilities of miſery, can teach it with the celerity of thought to tranſport itſelf into the ſituation of the ſuffering object.

Rouſſeau very juſtly cenſures all thoſe methods which have been followed, and all thoſe rules which have been laid down by writers, to teach the affections to flow in the channel of benevolence.

"To teach children charity, ſays Rouſſeau, we make them give alms, as if we were above giving it ourſelves. It is the maſter, however, who ſhould give alms, and not the ſcholar. Indeed, how fond ſoever the former may be of his pupil, he ought to make him believe, that a child of his age is as yet unworthy of ſo great a privilege.

"To give alms, is the action of a man who may be ſuppoſed to know the value of what he beſtows, and the want his fellow creatures have of it. A child who knows nothing of either, can have no

merit in giving alms. What are to them the round pieces of metal they carry in their pocket, and which ſerve to no other purpoſe, but to give away? A child would ſooner give a beggar a hundred guineas, than a cake; but require the little prodigal to give away his playthings, his ſweetmeats, and other trifles he is fond of, and we ſhall preſently ſee whether or not we have made him truly liberal."

The effects made by impreſſions on infants will be found to abide with them through life, and we ſhall find on obſervation, that every ſpecies of liberality we ſee practiſed, except the ſums extorted by ſympathy, or by a religious ſentiment from avarice, are but different modes of prodigality. There are thouſands who will give their money, becauſe they have been taught to ſet little ſtore by it; but how few, how very few of thoſe who make a figure in every public ſubſcription for charitable purpoſes, would part with any trifle on which they ſet a value, or would beſtow any of their time, or their attention, to meliorate the ſituation of ſufferers, though ſuch a ſacrifice would in ſome caſes better anſwer a benevolent end, than the moſt laviſh donations? There are many miſeries to which we are ſubjected, that money cannot remove. The ſick man languiſhing under the tedium which accompanies his enervated ſtate, wants the re-animating enjoyment of ſocial intercourſe. The afflicted mourner wants the conſo-

lations

lations which flow from ſympathy; and the weak and the giddy are often loſt for the want of advice, which, if properly adminiſtered, would be gladly received. How much more good would be attained by the ſums daily given, if they were diſtributed with economy, and with an attention to the ſituation of ſufferers, and the degrees of miſery endured. But theſe are duties which require time, attention, aſſiduity, and trouble; whereas the merely putting the hand in the pocket, is an action eaſily atchieved, and if not, the offspring of vanity can only be conſidered as a tax paid for the quieting conſcience, and thoſe feelings which the ſight of miſery ſometimes excites in the coldeſt boſom.

The parade with which children are commonly uſed to beſtow alms, has a tendency to cheriſh the growth of pride, and a ſupercilious contempt for wretchedneſs. I have ſeen a beggar, bent down with age, ſtanding for ſome minutes before a child, with his cap in his hand, and his knee bent, expecting in this humble and uneaſy attitude the boon of a halfpenny, which was to be adminiſtered by little maſter or miſs, on the opinion that the practice of beſtowing alms was favourable to the acquiring habits of liberality.

Some tutors have endeavoured to induce theſe habits, by returning to children in a ſhort time what they have given in preſents; and the

judicious Locke adviſes to manage, ſo as to convince children by experience, that the moſt liberal are always the beſt provided for; but the objections of Rouſſeau on this part of Locke's ſyſtem, are undoubtedly founded in truth. You will by ſuch methods, ſays he, only render children liberal in appearance, and covetous in fact. They will have the liberality of an uſurer, who would give a penny for a pound. But when they come to the point of giving things away in good earneſt, adieu to habit; when they found things did not come back again, they would ſoon ceaſe to give them away.

LETTER

LETTER XIII.

The ſame Subject continued.

YES, Hortenſia; Rouſſeau is right in the opinion, that the virtues of children are of the negative kind; and that in endeavouring to produce the fruits of reaſon and experience at too early a ſeaſon, we are deprived of the harveſt of a riper age. Let it be then the principal care of tutors, to preſerve the infant mind free from the malignant paſſions, and the benign affections will grow of themſelves. Let it be their care to make their pupils feel the utility of benevolence, by being themſelves the objects of it. Let no capricious partialities, no ill founded preference, growing from perſonal charms or accompliſhments, or from the gifts of genius, ſet them the example of a departure from the ſtrict principles of equity, and give them reaſon to complain both of the injuſtice of Nature and of man.

But it is not through the medium of ſelf only, that children ſhould be taught leſſons of benevolence; they ſhould ſee it diſpenſed to every object around them with ſuch a conſtancy, as ſhould keep them in perfect ignorance that the vices of injuſ-

tice and inhumanity have any exiſtence. They ought not to be ſuffered to ridicule others, unreproved. Should they once take a pleaſure in the pain they give the human mind, benevolence will never be the leading feature in their character. As children are not able to enter into any nice examination on the different claims of wretchedneſs, it might be proper to avoid carrying them much in the way of objects of charity; but whenever accident preſented ſuch, they ſhould never ſee them go away unrelieved.

You will perhaps ſay, that this indiſcriminate liberality might lead them into enthuſiaſm or prodigality, and uſe them to beſtow their alms without judgment or preference; but neither of theſe conſequences would enſue. Enthuſiaſm is the offspring of ſpeculation, never of habitual practice; and as I have ſaid before, children are not able to enter into thoſe diſtinctions, which experience can alone teach, it is ſufficient for them, if their principles and habits are of the right kind: rules of prudence are to be left to after inſtruction, when a larger intercourſe with the world ſets forth a variety of examples to view. Prodigality, is a vice that either owes it riſe to the little value we ſee put on money by thoſe about us, or it proceeds from having our pockets loaded with coin before we can attain any knowledge of its worth. But to avoid giving my pupils either habits

bits of avarice or prodigality, or teazing them with precepts, which would undoubtedly be miſunderſtood, I would never put them into the poſſeſſion of any money, till they were of an age to be taught its value by the uſe they would be able to make of it.

If brutes were to draw a character of man, Hortenſia, do you think they would call him a benevolent being? No; their repreſentations would be ſomewhat of the ſame kind as the fabled furies and other infernals in ancient mythology. Fortunately, for the reputation of the ſpecies, the brutes can neither talk nor write; and being our own panegyriſts, we can give ourſelves what attributes we pleaſe, and call our confined and partial ſympathy, the ſublime virtue of benevolence. Goodneſs to man, and mercy to brutes, is all that is taught by the moraliſt; and this mercy is of a nature which if properly defined, can only be diſtinguiſhed by the inferiority of its degree from the vice of cruelty. Certainly every tutor not drawn from the dregs of the people, would prevent his pupil from partaking of Domitian's favorite amuſement, and would reſcue a miſerable inſect or other animal from the tortures inflicted by a wanton fancy; but would he not ſuffer him to extend evil in other modes? Would he prevent him from robbing birds of their young? would he ſhut out all habits of cruelty by keeping him from the

the chace and other ſports of the field, or from the hardened barbarity of putting worms on a hook as baits to catch fiſh? Would he ſet him the example both of a negative, and an active goodneſs in a total forbearance of every unneceſſary injury, and in the ſeizing all opportunities to do acts of kindneſs to every feeling being?

There are very few of the inſect or reptile tribes which belong to this country, that can be ſaid to be perſonally injurious to man; yet we are brought up with ſuch prejudices, that they never eſcape our violence whenever they come within our reach. You will perhaps, call it a laughable weakneſs; but I do acknowledge to you, that I take a warm intereſt in the happineſs of the brutes, as far as it is compatible with the nature of things. The ſtile of my amuſements are quite oppoſite to that of Domitian's. I take a pleaſure in reſtoring life; and though I do not give harbour to all animals, yet I never make them ſuffer for having taken ſhelter under my roof; and I am ſo perſuaded of the advantages which attend the indulgence of ſuch ſenſibilities, when not accompanied with caprice and partiality, that I would have all thoſe who are about the perſons of children act the ſame part, though their tempers ſhould not be of the kind to receive pleaſure from it.

I do not think that the poets in general are the beſt moraliſts; but the following lines of Miſs Williams,

Williams, raiſed the virtues of the author's heart high in my eſtimation.

Eltruda o'er the diſtant mead,
Would haſte at cloſing day;
And to the bleating mother lead,
The lamb that chanced to ſtray.

For the bruiſed inſect on the waſte,
A ſigh would heave her breaſt;
And oft her careful hand replaced,
The linnet's falling neſt.

To her, ſenſations calm as theſe
Could ſweet delight impart,
The ſimple pleaſure moſt can pleaſe
The uncorrupted heart.

Full oft with eager ſtep ſhe flies
To cheer the roofleſs cot,
Where the lone widow breaths her ſighs,
And wails her deſperate lot.

Their weeping mother's trembling knees,
Her liſping infants claſp;
Their meek imploring look ſhe ſees,
She feels their tender graſp.

Wild throbs her aching boſom ſwell,
They marked the burſting ſigh;
Nature has formed the ſoul to feel,
They weep, unknowing why.

Her hands the liberal boon impart,
And much her tear avails,
To raiſe the mourners' drooping heart,
Where feeble utterance fails.

On the pale cheek where hung the tear
Of agonizing woe,
She bids the chearful bloom appear,
The tear of rapture flow.

Thus

Thus on ſoft wings the moments flew,
Tho' love implored their ſtay;
While ſome new virtue roſe to view,
And marked each fleeting day.

The ſoft and gentle ſatisfactions which flow from the practice of the benign virtues, are not of the fleeting kind; they afford pleaſure on recollection, and they ſerve as a kind of ſtore, on which the mind feeds, when in want of conſolation from the preſſure of preſent pain. But let us return to the ſubject of cultivating in children the virtue of benevolence.

Every child, from the pleaſure which the exerciſe of power gives, is very fond of becoming the maſter of animals; but this inclination is often thwarted by parents, owing to prejudices ariſing from an undue contempt of the brutes, or from an apprehenſion of injury from them, or that they will meet with ill treatment from the caprice, or injudicious fondneſs of children.

The apprehenſion of injury from brute animals, is I believe totally without foundation; for their tempers are ſo generally good, that the wildeſt of them never injure thoſe from whom they receive benefits; and tame animals extend their kindneſs to all whom they are uſed to ſee. The accident of madneſs, which ſometimes attends dogs and cats, is indeed of the moſt dreadful kind; yet, as I believe it never happens to any animal

animal who is well looked after and properly treated, the objection can never be regarded as material. The other objection of ill treatment to the brutes, from the caprice and injudicious fondneſs of children, has more weight; but can only affect thoſe who do not know how to educate children properly.

I would therefore indulge my pupils in the keeping as many animals as they can properly attend. It will give them the practice of benevolence, it will ſerve as an agreeable and innocent amuſement, and by the knowledge they will thus acquire of brute nature, they will be cured of prejudices founded on ignorance, and in the vanity and conceit of man.

LETTER

LETTER XIV.

Literary Education of young Perſons.

"THE moſt critical interval of human life," ſays Rouſſeau, "is that between the hour of birth, and twelve years of age. This is the time wherein vice and error take root, without our being poſſeſſed of any inſtrument to deſtroy them; and when the implement is found, they are ſo deeply grounded, that they are no longer to be eradicated. If children took a leap from their mother's breaſt, and at once arrived at the age of reaſon, the methods of education now uſually taken with them would be very proper; but a ccording to the progreſs of Nature, they require thoſe which are very different. We ſhould not tamper with the mind till it has acquired all its faculties: for it is impoſſible it ſhould perceive the light we hold out, while it is blind, or that it ſhould purſue over an immenſe plain of ideas, that route which reaſon hath ſo ſlightly traced, as to be perceptible only to the ſharpeſt ſight."

This, and a great deal more to the ſame purpoſe, does Rouſſeau urge, for reducing the firſt parts of education to a ſyſtem merely negative.

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The arguments of the author are very ingenious; and I ſo far agree with him as to think, that till the mind has attained ſufficient ſtrenth to co-operate with its inſtructor, in rejecting by the dictates of judgment, improper aſſociations of ideas, and in ſelecting ſuch as are to be deſired, it were better to leave it entirely to the ſimple impreſſions which it receives from example, and the experience of conſequences. For opinions taken up on mere authority, muſt ever prevent original thinking, muſt ſtop the progreſs of improvement, and inſtead of producing rational agents, can only make man the mere ape of man.

It has been ſhrewdly obſerved by ſome writers, that we could be brought by education to adopt the greateſt abſurdities, as eaſily as the moſt reaſonable propoſitions; and when we conſider the oppoſite manners which have prevailed in different ſocieties, the equal warmth with which they have been defended, and the implicit obedience which have been paid to them, we ſhall not find much reaſon to depend on authority for the truth of our opinions, or to value ourſelves on a faculty which has had little to do in forming our principles of conduct.

To read virtue right, we muſt diveſt ourſelves of all partialities and prejudices; and to diveſt oneſelf of all partialities and prejudices, is a taſk which perhaps has never been thoroughly

accompliſhed by any man. However, to preſerve as much as poſſible the independence of the mind; let us be very ſparing of our precept to the credulous ears of infancy; and let us devote the firſt ten or twelve years of life to the ſtrengthening of the corporal faculties, to the giving uſeful habits, and to thoſe attainments which can be acquired, without burthening the mind with ideas which it cannot well comprehend. The Latin grammar; geography taught in the eaſieſt and pleaſanteſt manner; ſuch parts of phyſics as lie open to the attention of children; writing, arithmetic, and the French language, which may be made eaſy to learn by having French domeſtics, are fully ſufficient to fill up the time of childhood; and to exerciſe its growing faculties without the uſe of books, which I would ſeldom introduce, but with the view of amuſement. Theſe I would alſo confine to a very ſmall number choſen for the ſimplicity of the ſubject, and for the purpoſe of entertainment; with an exception however in favour of ſuch eaſy Latin authors as are uſed in the firſt claſſes of the public ſchools, in order to exemplify, by actual reading, thoſe rules of grammar which are every day committed to memory. If any one of my pupils ſhould ſhew any marks of a more than ordinary vigor of intellect, or any great impatience to enlarge his ideas, I would at the age of ten years enter him into a courſe of reading, which ſhould

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ſhould commence with the moſt celebrated fables in the Engliſh, Latin, and French languages. At the age of twelve, and not before, his ſtudies may be extended to a proper ſelection of Plutarch's Lives in the Engliſh tranſlation, Addiſon's Spectators, Guthrie's Geographical Grammar, and Mentelle's Geographie Comparée, in the original: ſelected parts of theſe laſt books may be committed to memory; and Addiſon's Spectators ought to be written as exerciſes, and ſome paſſages parſed accurately in the manner in which a Latin or Greek leſſon is uſually analized. During this period, the Engliſh grammar ought to make part of the pupil's ſtudy, beginning with Aſh's introduction to Lowth, and then with Lowth's introduction.

At the age of fourteen, themes written in Latin and Engliſh ſhould be exacted, with a proper attention to Dr. Samuel Johnſon's practical precepts, by obliging the pupil to compoſe with celerity. Correctneſs of thought and compoſition will be acquired by time and labour; but a ſlowneſs in the collecting and arranging ideas, will ever attend the generality of perſons, who have not from the beginning been neceſſitated by the force of authority to uſe diſpatch.

At this period of life, I would recommend the commencing a courſe of hiſtory, beginning with Rollin's Ancient Hiſtory, in French; then one of

the beſt of the Engliſh hiſtories in this language, and Livy's hiſtory in the original.

The reading of Greek hiſtory may be poſtponed till the language is acquired; but the thread of the Roman hiſtory ſhould be leiſurely purſued through Livy, Dion. Caſſius, Salluſt, Tacitus, in Latin, and Ferguſon and Gibbon in Engliſh. The Hiſtory of Modern Europe ſhould ſucceed the ſtudy of the Greek hiſtory; and at the age of fifteen, the rudiments of this language ſhould be taught, and the ſtudy purſued till a competent knowledge of it is acquired. At the age of ſixteen, and not before, the pupil may commence a courſe of moral lectures, beginning with Cicero's Offices, and purſuing the thread of this ſtudy through Cicero, Plutarch, Epictetus, and Seneca. At this age, if he is a pupil of taſte, he will take great delight in Fenelon's Telemachus. Rollin's Belle Lettres, and the poets may now be introduced as a relief from the drier ſtudy of morals and hiſtory; but the Engliſh poetry I ſhould confine to ſome ſelected plays of Shakeſpeare, to Addiſon's Cato, to Steele's Conſcious Lovers, to Milton and to Pope. The French poetry I would limit to Boileau; and ſome plays ſelected out of Corneille, Racine, Moliere, and Voltaire's works; and the Latin lectures to ſelected plays of Terence, ſome ſelect epigrams from Martial, and to Virgil's Eneid and Georgics.

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It may be unneceſſary to ſay, that there are many pieces even of the moral Pope, very improper for the peruſal of youth. His Abelard and Eloiſa is only fit for the autumnal ſeaſon of life; and though it is painful to ſuppreſs the productions of genius and of labour, it would have been better if his imitations of Chaucer had been committed to the flames. As the tutor ſhould always accompany his pupil in his lectures in poetry, he may take an opportunity to make obſervations on the potent power of numbers, and theſe he may illuſtrate by turning into plain proſe ſome of the moſt ſtriking parts of Pope's Eſſay on Man. The following brilliant paſſage will be found to be quite nonſenſe when ſtripped of the pomp of verſe.

> From Nature's chain, whatever link you ſtrike,
> Tenth, or ten thouſandth breaks the chain alike;
> And, if each ſyſtem in gradation roll
> Alike eſſential to the amazing whole,
> The leaſt confuſion but in one, not all
> That ſyſtem only, but the whole muſt fall.
> Let earth unbalanced from her orbit fly,
> Planets and ſuns run lawleſs through the ſky;
> Let ruling angels from their ſpheres be hurled,
> Being on being wrecked, and world on world:
> Heaven's whole foundations to their center nod,
> And Nature tremble to the throne of God.

If a man in plain proſe was to ſay, that were one of the minuteſt tribes of the minuter beings to be put out of exiſtence, it would cauſe ſuch confuſion as to hurl ruling angels from their ſpheres, and

make Nature tremble to the throne of God, we ſhould either think him a bigot to the doctrine of a plenum, or regard him as a madman or a blockhead. Yet ſuch are the charms of poetry, that moſt readers of this famous eſſay think they have gained a great many ſolid ideas from the moſt exceptionable paſſages; and even the philoſopher gives way to the pleaſures of ſenſe, and ſuffers himſelf to be captivated by the power of harmony. The pupil, with proper ſtrictures on this and on other paſſages of Pope's works, will be taught to admire without intoxication; and at the ſame time that he ſets a juſt value on an art which can give to reaſon and to truth an irreſiſtible ſtrength, he will be ever on his guard againſt the deluſive power of ſound.

Some of the moſt elegant, forcible, and brilliant paſſages of the poets may form part of the exerciſes of the pupil, who ſhould be made to repeat them aloud. If there are more than one pupil, one day in the week may be allotted for this purpoſe; but I would entirely prohibit the acting of plays, for theſe reaſons; it requires more confidence than a young perſon ought to have, to acquit himſelf with ſpirit in the character of an actor; and ſuch exerciſes induce a ſwelling bombaſt ſtile of ſpeaking, with an unnatural geſture and action. The ſtage actors are of all perſons the worſt models for oratory; they would meet with no

admiration

admiration did they not outſtep the modeſty of nature; and our taſtes are ſo vitiated by theſe repreſentations, that a pupil would loſe the applauſe he deſerved did he condeſcend to excellence. During this period of education, when the pupil has made conſiderable advances in grammar and claſſical learning, he may improve his knowledge of ancient geography by the ſtudy of Cellarius. The uſe of the globes may be now introduced, Ferguſon's aſtronomy taught, lectures on experimental philoſophy attended, and the knowledge of natural hiſtory acquired by the peruſal of thoſe celebrated naturaliſts Pliny and Buffon.

LETTER XV.

Literary Education continued—Religion—Foreign Travel—Novels.

AT the age of eighteen, Hortenſia, my pupil, if he is a lad of genius, will have acquired a ſufficient knowledge of the Greek language to read with ſatisfaction Plato, Demoſthenes, Homer, Euripides, and Sophocles; but of the firſt of theſe authors, I would at preſent confine the reading to his dialogues. Cæſar's Commentaries, and Cicero's Orations, may make part of the Latin ſtudy; but proper obſervations ought to be made on thoſe paſſages, where Cicero ſhews himſelf more the lawyer, than the man of ſtrict integrity. And as this is the ſeaſon of life when the intellect has acquired its full vigor, we may ply it more cloſely than we have hitherto done. Mr. Horne Tooke's ΕΠΕΑΠΤΕΡΟΕΝΤΑ, Mr. Harris's Hermes, and lord Monboddo on language, may be now read with advantage; and a courſe of logic entered on, which I would begin with a work written by Mr. Harris, entitled Philoſophical Arrangements; and from theſe I would proceed to Ariſtotle, the founder of the ſcience.

At the age of nineteen, the ſtudy of politics may be commenced, and the authors I would recommend

mend on this ſubject, are Harrington, Sydney, Locke, and Hobbes. A diligent ſtudent, with that fund of knowledge which my pupil would at this age have acquired, might make himſelf maſter of the queſtion agitated in theſe writings, in the ſpace of a year; when he ſhould enter on the ſtudy of ancient mythology, commencing with Spences Polymetis; then proceeding to Heſiod, Ovid, Blackwell, Baniere, and ending with Bryant. The ſtudy of ancient metaphyſics comes next in order to ancient mythology, and may be learnt in Plato, Cudworth, and Monboddo. When a competent knowledge of this ſubject is gained, and the ſtudent has reached his one and twentieth year, it will be the ſeaſon to peruſe the ſacred writings, with the beſt commentaries. Lardner and Moſheim's eccleſiaſtical hiſtories may next ſucceed. To theſe, a ſmall number of the moſt celebrated controverſial writers, for and againſt the ſyſtem of revelation; and when the ſtudent has made himſelf maſter of this important queſtion, which I conceive he will be hardly able to do in leſs than two years, he may cloſe his education with the ſtudy of mathematics, and the ſerious peruſal of that excellent work entitled, "the Light of Nature purſued," which takes in the whole range of modern metaphyſics, and which gives the beſt inſight into the mechaniſm of the human mind, and the nature and progreſs of the paſſions, of any book yet extant.

And now, Hortenſia, that I have concluded the mechanical part of education, I have leiſure to anſwer your objections, for I will not compliment you ſo much, my friend, to ſuppoſe you have gotten over every prejudice, which cuſtom and general opinion impoſes on the wiſeſt of the human race What! exclaim you, put off the peruſal of the ſacred writings to ſo late a period of manhood as the age of one and twenty, and run the riſk of your pupil being ſnatched away from the knowledge of Chriſtianity by a premature death? nay; provided he ſhould be ſpared long enough to be acquainted with the glad tidings of the goſpel, you ſuffer him to run the riſk of becoming a truant from his newly acquired principles by the peruſal of infidel writers! Why, my friend, much ſtudy has undermined that good ſenſe and ſound judgment for which I uſed to admire you: do not you perceive, that you have ſtretched your plan to ſuch an enormous length, as to extend the education even of your bright genius, beyond the bounds of that moment which the laws of Europe have ſet for the nonage both of males and females? What young heir do you think would play the ſubmiſſive part, when he is old enough to commence lawgiver, and ſuffer you to plan for him ſchemes of literary labour at that halcyon hour, when he no longer pants for twenty-one, but is become the maſter both of his buſineſs and amuſement?

ment? Were you as good an œconomiſt of time at theſe precious moments of life, as is warranted both by dead and living examples, your pupil would have run through all the mechanical part of education, and made the tour of Europe by one and twenty; when he would be ready to aſſiſt his country with his ſage counſels, and to enter into the matrimonial ſtate. How many noble families, my friend, might ſink into non-exiſtence for want of heirs, whilſt you were vainly endeavouring to make a phœnix, inſtead of a man?

Truly, Hortenſia, you have collected together a longer ſtring of objections than I did imagine lay againſt my plan; but I have taken too much pains to digeſt it and bring it into method, to give it up eaſily. I ſhall therefore endeavour to ſatisfy you as well as I can.

Firſt, your objection to the putting off the peruſal of the ſacred writings to ſo late a period of life as the age of twenty-one, and making the infidel writers part of my pupil's ſtudy; paradoxical as this may appear to you, my deſign in this arrangement, is to make a true Chriſtian, that is, a Chriſtian on conviction, of which I believe there are very few in this age. Nay; do not ſtare and look grave; I repeat my aſſertion, that modern times produce but few real Chriſtians. In the darker ages of the world, authority had ſufficient weight to ſilence entirely the oppoſition of reaſon,

and the ſooner it began its influence, the greater was its ſtrength; but from ſome peculiar circumſtances which have attended eccleſiaſtical affairs, it is become the faſhion to preach up liberality of thought on religious ſubjects; and it is on religion alone that the greater number of men ever exert their freedom. The ſacred writings put into the hands of youth before they have acquired judgment, or a ſufficient literary knowledge to comprehend them thoroughly, muſt naturally give riſe to doubts; and a commerce with the world will afford ſufficient matter to encreaſe and confirm theſe, without the peruſal of infidel writers. Lively obſervations taken from theſe writers, when ſlung out in diſcourſe, are better adapted to make a ſtrong impreſſion on the mind of credulous youth, than a ſtring of arguments logically arranged in an elaborate treatiſe. Thus the ſeeds of ſcepticiſm are ſown in every mind; and though they may not always bring forth the fruits of a confirmed infidelity, they give riſe to troubleſome doubts; and the Chriſtian, as he calls himſelf, is willing to compound matters between his reaſon and his conſcience, by never thinking ſeriouſly on the ſubject. On theſe and ſimilar conſiderations, I do not introduce the ſtudy of the ſacred writings 'till pupils have acquired the full vigor of their intellect, 'till they are capable of judging the ſubjects laid before them with preciſion, and 'till a

full

full knowledge of the ſyſtems of religion which prevailed before Chriſtianity, with the philoſophical opinions of the ancients, enable them to diſcern plainly the advantages of thoſe lights which have been gained by revelation.

In this ſtate of an unbiaſſed mind, the evidence for and againſt Chriſtianity will be examined with clearneſs; and the judgment which the mind forms on the queſtion, will have a weight that no ſophiſtry can overthrow. Thus, Hortenſia, if my pupil becomes a Chriſtian, of which I entertain no doubt, his faith will be grounded on the full conviction of his unbiaſſed judgment; or ſhould his determinations be taken on the oppoſite ſide of the queſtion, he will at leaſt be an Infidel on rational principles, which is a great point gained in theſe days where vanity, caprice, faſhion, and motives of vicious indulgence, give the turn to all our opinions.

In anſwer to your ſecond objection, I do firmly believe, that pupils trained after the manner which I have propoſed in theſe letters, will be docile to every advice which points out to them the way of gaining any addition to the fund of knowledge already acquired: for the love of knowledge is a growing and an inſatiable appetite. Beſide, man, when he is properly educated, is the gentleſt of all animals, affectionate to all who ſurround him, and particularly ſo to thoſe from whom he has received

received important benefits. In ſhort, ſuch a tutor as I have deſcribed, whether he is a parent or not, would always preſerve an authority over the mind of his pupil. But education, you ſay, has commonly been finiſhed, and the tour of Europe made, by the age of one and twenty. It has ſo; but of what kind is this education, even when it has been performed in the beſt manner, and to the beſt effect? why, it is ſuch a knowledge of the Greek and Latin tongues, as will ſerve the purpoſe of going through all the claſſes of a public ſchool, and the taking the neceſſary degrees of the univerſity, with reputation. It is an acquirement of ſome knowledge in mathematics, and ſome acquaintance with the Latin and Greek poets, who, by the bye, at this early ſeaſon of life, are much more apt to corrupt, than to improve the mind. When the young gentleman is thus fitted for his travels, he ſets out on his tour with a tutor, who ſerves for no other purpoſe than a convenient humble companion; and, whilſt he is poſting through all the capital towns in France, Germany, and Italy, he forgets every part of his learning which is worth remembering. Some Italian perhaps, he acquires, and a good pronunciation of the French language; but for theſe accompliſhments he pays dear by adding to the ſtock he picked up at home, a large addition of foreign follies and vices. It is now that the great career of

life

life is commenced with all its important relations; when we might expect from the advantages arising from the beſt education, an example of virtue would be ſet forth worthy of imitation; but in what inſtances are ſuch expectations verified? on the contrary, the hopeful pupil ſpreads the contagion of folly far and wide; and having by turns figured in the character of the French petit maitre, the rake, the gameſter, and the fox hunter, he at length, urged by neceſſity or ambition, takes up that of the politician; and having acted the thoughtleſs fool in the gay ſeaſon of life, ends his courſe in the character of the confirmed knave. In truth, Hortenſia, I think it is better not to propagate our race at all, than to propagate a line of dupes and ſharpers; and that the extinction of family is the extinction of reproach, where the virtue of its individuals does not correſpond to the ſplendor of its external advantages.

On the propoſition of making the tour of Europe, at a ſeaſon of life when the judgment is mature and fit for uſeful obſervation and reflection, I have Milton, Locke, and common ſenſe on my ſide; and as poſting on the continent is now ſo much the faſhion, as often to oblige a man of fortune to repeat his tour, in order to gratify his family, ſuch a one, who intends to enter early into the bonds of matrimony, would do well to poſtpone his travels till he is married; when, if he

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is a wiſe man he will rejoice at the having ſpared himſelf the mortification of a double baniſhment from his own country.

But I muſt tell you, Hortenſia, leſt you ſhould miſtake my plan, that though I have been obliged (in order to avoid confuſion) to ſpeak commonly in the maſculine character, that the ſame rules of education in all reſpects are to be obſerved to the female as well as to the male children, only to conform as much as rationally can be done to the cuſtoms of Europe; for we muſt make ſome difference in the ſports of our pupils, after they have paſſed the period of mere childhood. The male pupils may be exerciſed with cricket, and ſuch like games, and may be taught to ride and to fence; but this laſt, as a mere healthy exerciſe only, and not on the romantic notion of playing the knight errant, and acting criminally on a principle of honour. Our young ladies muſt alſo have their exerciſes; but we muſt confine theſe to walking, riding, dancing, and battledore.

But I beſeech you, Hortenſia, to give me your attention a little longer, or I ſhall have the formidable body of novel writers up in arms. What not one novel allowed to amuſe the private hour of leiſure, after the fatigue of ſtudy? No cloſet recreation, where the mind may be at once delighted, and taught the refinement of modern ſentiment? Where boys may learn the pleaſures of

la belle paſſion, and girls the endearments which attend a virtuous affection for a worthy object?

That a novel writer ſhould behold his productions in a favourable light, does not ſurprize me; for to do theſe authors juſtice, they are in general ranged on the ſide of virtue, but they are apt to deceive. To draw a great variety of characters according to life, it is requiſite to have a comprehenſive knowledge of the human mind, or a peculiar dexterity in piercing through the veil which cuſtom, and a regard for character, puts on. And it is the difficulty of copying Nature with exactneſs, and the circle of moral conſequences, as they really exiſt, which occaſion novel writers to draw ſituations unnaturally, and to give forced and exaggerated ſentiments to their characters, and particularly to their hero and heroine. But the principal objection which lies againſt theſe compoſitions is, that they are all the hiſtory of lovers; and love tales are always improper for the ears of youth, whoſe mind ſhould be ever open to the ſoft feelings of benevolence, but be kept as long as poſſible in ignorance of the melting ſenſations of what is called in pre-eminence, "the tender paſſion." A young reader ſoon finds out by the tenor of novel hiſtory, that love is an unconquerable paſſion; that every fine mind is ſubject to its infection; and that individuals are paired by ſome power of ſympathy, to which they are

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ſo abſolutely ſubjected, that the moſt obdurate heart muſt yield when the deſtined object comes in view.

Many trips to Scotland are undoubtedly projected and executed, and many unfortunate connections formed, from the influence which novels gain over the mind; and though criminal amours are in general cenſured in theſe works, yet an imprudent conduct through life, is often the conſequence of an improper aſſociation of ideas formed in youth.

Cervantes, le Sage, and Fielding, are undoubtedly ſtrict copiers of Nature, and as ſuch, will ever give delight to the judicious reader. Don Quixote may be read at every period of life, without leaving any miſchievous impreſſion on the mind; but le Sage's capital work, Gil Blas, is one of the laſt books which I ſhould put into the hands of youth.

It is indeed an admirable picture of the deceit, roguery, folly, and vice, which is to be found in every rank of ſociety; and as ſuch, is capable of affording very inſtructive leſſons to thoſe who, having finiſhed their education, are launching into the wide ocean of life; but the art of the writer is exerted to pleaſe the fancy, rather than to mend the heart.

The hero of his tale, though void of every principle of diſintereſted virtue, and ſoiled with a variety

variety of moral blemiſhes, is raiſed from a low rank in life to the ſtation of a Spaniſh nobleman; and the lively parts he poſſeſſes, his qualities of good humour, and his excellent addreſs, plead ſo much in his favour, that the reader is not at all inclined to be angry at his ſucceſs.

Fielding's works are in general liable to the ſame exceptions which lie againſt Le Sage. But his Joſeph Andrews is ſo admirably conducted, and the hero is a character of ſuch true virtue and ſimplicity, that this work may be read with ſafety, and even with improvement by youth. Cyrus's Travels, a novel of the grave kind, may be added to this ſmall liſt; but to Richardſon, who is regarded as the moſt moral novel writer of the whole claſs, I ſhould not pay the ſame compliment. It is true, that he is ſublimely pathetic; and though prolix to a blameable degree, he will be always read, for the firſt time, with great ſatisfaction; but his hiſtory of Pamela, which exhibits a pattern of chaſtity in low life, is conducted in ſuch a manner as to render it totally unfit for the peruſal of youth. His Clariſſa Harlow is not entirely free from the ſame exception; and though this novel is replete with religious and moral ſentiments, and the obvious intent of the author is to dreſs virtue in an attractive garb, and to guard the inexperienced mind againſt the ſubtle attacks of vicious intereſted characters, yet he is not ſuffi-

ciently correct in his ideas to ſet forth in his heroine an exact pattern of moral lovelineſs, nor to draw ſuch a character of his rake, as ſhould render him diſguſtful to the giddy part of the female ſex.

Clariſſa Harlow, though repreſented as a paragon of piety and moral excellence, is poſitive and conceited; and all her diſtreſſes are brought upon her by the adhering to ſome very whimſical notions which ſhe has entertained of duty and propriety of conduct. She will not carry her ſubmiſſion far enough to render her father happy by marrying the man he has choſen for her huſband; nor will ſhe defend herſelf from his unjuſt reſentment, by aſſerting her rights to an independent fortune left to her by an indulgent grandfather. She ſuffers herſelf to be tricked into the power of a known rake, and incurs the utmoſt injury from her ſituation, by neither taking the opportunities which offered to get clear of him, nor by inſiſting on his acting the honourable part. According to the rules of tragedy, the hiſtory cloſes with the death of the heroine; but this cataſtrophe is not ſo much the conſequence of an oppreſſed mind, as a rigid adherence to the diſcipline of faſting, whilſt under the alarming ſymptoms of a deep decline.

In the hiſtory of Sir Charles Grandiſon, there is not ſo much ſublime pathos; but the hero is a more unexceptionable character than that of Clariſſa

riſſa Harlow. Indeed, virtue in him, and in the heroine of this piece, appears ſometimes in attitudes ridiculouſly ſtiff, and in a garb too pompous for exact imitation: it is alſo united to a viſible portion of conceit; and on theſe reaſons, I would poſtpone the peruſal of this, as well as the hiſtories of Pamela, and Clariſſa Harlow, to an age when the judgment is ſufficiently ripe to ſeparate the wheat from the chaff.

You will perhaps wonder that I have not placed the Cecilia of Miſs Burney, in my ſelect liſt: it is not that I am leſs an admirer than others of this lady's performance; her characters are juſt to a degree, that ſurpriſes, when it is conſidered that they are drawn by a very young perſon. The conduct of her ſtory is well conceived, her ſituations are in general natural, and virtue is every where inculcated by pleaſing repreſentations of it. But the conduct of the heroine in giving up a large fortune for the ſake of marrying the heir of a family, whoſe abſurd pride induce them to regard her with contempt; and the incident of her ſubſequent madneſs, may fill a young perſon's mind with too vaſt an idea of the power of love. I do not mean theſe obſervations as cenſures on her work; I am perſuaded, that young perſons will peruſe it with pleaſure, and advantage, when their education is complete, and their judgment

ſufficiently ripe to taſte their beauties. Nor am I an enemy to theſe compoſitions in general. There are ſeveral which are not devoid of the power of pleaſing and improving, though written by perſons ſeveral degrees inferior to the capital authors juſt mentioned; and were they peruſed at a proper age, as a relaxation to ſeverer ſtudies, they would throw variety into domeſtic life, and ſerve as a good ſuccedaneum to the unmeaning ſyſtem of diſſipation which at preſent prevails. But to confine literary occupation entirely to novels, and the lighter parts of the belle lettre, is a perverſion of reaſon and common ſenſe, which diſtinguiſhes the preſent age from every other which has ſucceeded the revival of letters, and cannot fail of having a powerful influence over the manners of ſociety.

LETTER XVI.

Influence of Impreſſions—Example ſhould coincide with Inſtruction—Phyſical Prudence—Indiſcretion.

SUFFICIENT I hope has been ſaid of the formal part of education, Hortenſia, to give you ſome idea of the deficiency of common practice. It is time now to return to that part of tuition, which depends on the impreſſions the minds of youth receive from verbal inſtruction, and from the example and conduct of thoſe around them.

Amongſt the many juſt remarks on life, which have originated from the judicious and attentive obſerver, and which in proceſs of time have gained a general authority among the vulgar, the following, "that example is better than precept," will be found to accord exactly with the nature of the human mind. We are apt to ſuſpect the ſincerity of thoſe perſons whoſe practice is at variance with the tenor of their inſtruction; nor ought we to expect that youth and inexperience can attain ſuch a comprehenſive view of things, as to give a proper weight to the power of habits, and that irreſiſtable influence of aſſociations, which tranſport

the mind beyond all the rules of reaſon, which force its aſſent to extravagancies that war againſt its obvious intereſt, and even its preſervation, which break down all the balances benevolent Nature has formed for its ſecurity, and which urges it to exclaim with Medea, "I know what evils wait my dreadful purpoſe." It is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that the unphiloſophic mind ſhould fall into that error which was general among the ancients, and which renders their ſyſtems very irreconcileable to common experience: viz. that the mind never gives it aſſent to actions contrary to the conviction of its judgment, on matters of ſelf intereſt. But it is plain, that uneaſineſs is the main ſpring of activity in the human character, and not concluſions drawn from the conſiderations of a ſuperior good.

A variation of opinion on this ſubject, is the important point in which the philoſopher differs from the vulgar man. Were a young perſon's judgment ſufficiently comprehenſive to view this queſtion in its proper light, there would be little need of inſtruction to enlighten the underſtanding, and the pupil would be better qualified to play the part of the maſter, than moſt of thoſe who undertake this important office. But a doubt of the ſincerity of the teacher, is not the only evil which ariſes from an oppoſition of practice with inſtruction. Young perſons are apt to regard an ex-

emption from thoſe rules of conduct which wiſdom points out, as an enviable privilege, attendant on that time of life which ſets us free from the controul of others; or feeding their imagination with vain glorious conceits of pre-eminence of conduct, they give a looſe to preſumptuous cenſures, which terminate in a contempt for thoſe whom they have been taught to reverence, and which naturally induce an incurable ſtate of indocility.

Do you think, ſays Madame D'Almane to a female friend, that Conſtantia, ſo often obliged to paſs two hours at church, will be always collected and attentive? ſure I am that more than once ſhe has envied her Mama, who during that time was in bed or making viſits*.

This is a fair and wiſe reproof, and it would be well for the ſpecies, if their general conduct did not afford ample grounds for ſimilar obſervations. How many parents do we both know, whoſe example and converſation are adapted to corrupt the pureſt mind; who themſelves indulge in every kind of debauchery, yet ſhew no clemency to the follies of youth and inexperience, if they happen to claſh with the intereſts of family pride; who expect in the conduct of their daughters, that prudence which in the preſent modes of life can never be found, where neither the natural con-

* Genlis Letters on Education.

ſtitution of the mind nor the cares of education are directed to this great end; who lead their ſons into the ways of vice and error, yet vainly expect from pampered appetites and habitual extravagancies, thoſe filial virtues which can alone exiſt with ſobriety, œconomy, temperance, and chaſtity; in a word, who faſhion a being, whoſe artificial wants muſt make him behold with regret the duration of a life which delays the expected bleſſing of heirſhip; and when this ſentiment becomes too big for concealment, theſe wiſe parents largely expatiate on the growing ingratitude of the age, without ever taking into the account the axiom, that an effect muſt neceſſarily follow its cauſe; and that the cauſes of diſobedience, and the want of filial piety in children, are moſt commonly to be found in the folly and vice of parental conduct.

I ſhall not pretend to enumerate all the inconſiſtencies which ariſe on the preſent mode of education, even in thoſe families who are attentive to the morals of their children; nor how often the oppoſition of practice with theory, muſt throw the miſt of confuſion over the reflections of the thinking pupil. I ſhall only obſerve, that the powers of the underſtanding are not ſufficiently ſtrong to combat the difficulties which in this early ſeaſon of life it has to encounter. Hence reaſon loſes its energy, and becomes no more than the echo of the public voice. Hence the taſk of original

thinking is given up; the moſt abſurd prejudices are adopted; the human character ſinks into the gregarious animal; every part of morals becomes fluctuating; and cuſtoms, manners, ſentiments change according to the notions of thoſe in power. Thus virtue, ſtripped of all that renders her divine and uſeful, aſſumes no other form than worldly prudence, and owes her precarious exiſtence to mental conſtitution and accident.

You will find in the conduct of Plato, Hortenſia, a noble inſtance of the power of example over precept. His nephew Pſeuſippus, who became exceſſively debauched, was turned out of doors by his parents. Plato took him in, and entertained him, as if he had never heard a word of his debaucheries. His friends, amazed and ſhocked at a procedure that ſeemed to them to carry inſenſibility in it, blamed him for not labouring to reform his nephew, and ſave him from utter ruin. Plato anſwered, that he was labouring more effectually than they imagined, in letting him ſee by the manner of his living, what an infinite difference there is between vice and virtue, and between honorable and baſe things. This method ſucceeded ſo well, that it inſpired Pſeuſippus with a great reſpect for his uncle, and a violent deſire to imitate him, and to devote himſelf to the ſtudy of philoſophy, in which it is ſaid he afterwards made a great progreſs.

There

There are many Pſeuſippuſes of both ſexes, who ſink into ruin by the cruel perſecution they ſuffer from ſociety, for faults which would have been amended, had a little lenity been joined with correction. But you parents, who are not diſpoſed to follow Plato's method of producing virtue, either give up the hope of reaping its fruit in the carriage of your children, or abſent yourſelves entirely from their ſociety, and put them into the hands of wiſe and virtuous perſons, who to the wiſdom of inſtruction will add the powerful influence of example.

You have agreed with me, Hortenſia, that the ſtiff carriage of former times, muſt naturally tend to eradicate all filial affection from the heart; but I muſt tell you, that parents ſhould not only lay aſide the air of the ſolemn dictator to their children, but when their reaſon begins to ripen and their affections to grow warm and vivid, they ſhould enter into the familiarity of a companionable friendſhip; by ſuch conduct they will be beforehand with the world, and become the firſt objects of a tender regard. They will thus have opportunities to diſcover the true bent of their childrens' temper, inclinations and abilities; they will acquire their full confidence, and they will be able to introduce inſtructive obſervations in ſuch a manner as is better adapted to ſteal on the mind and impreſs it

with

with wiſdom, than are the moſt laboured lectures of the ſchools.

It muſt be owned there are not many perſons able to make the moſt of this advice, but much may be done by men who will open their ears to inſtruction; and the ideas of the ſpeculatiſt may be carried into practice by thoſe who never gave birth to a ſimilar thought.

The diſpoſitions of children are various, and theſe varieties require to be attended to with care, or the fruits of education will be blaſted; for that mode of treatment which would rear ſome children up to honour and felicity, will be the ruin of others. This I take to be the ſole cauſe of that inequality of character and conduct which we daily ſee take place among the members of the ſame family.

There are ſome perſons who poſſeſs a phyſical prudence, which begins its operations with the firſt dawn of reaſon. Whether this quality of the mind owes its origin to the ſlow motion of the animal ſpirits, occaſioning a cold and phlegmatic temperature, ſeldom diſturbed by paſſion? Whether it ariſes from that equipoiſe of the affections, which prevents any ſingle one from gaining a predominance? Whether it proceeds from a natural timidity of mind, from an anxious attention to ſelf intereſt, or from a natural ſagacity, which points out with greater clearneſs, preciſion,

and

and celerity, the evil to be avoided, and the good to be purſued? Whether it ariſes from any one of theſe circumſtances ſingly, or from an union of two, or more of them, or from a happy combination of all? Certain it is, that the difference of character is great in this particular; and that ſome perſons are born with the principles of this uſeful quality, without poſſeſſing great vigour of intellect, ſhining parts, or thoſe energies of the mind which give birth to admirable actions.

Prudence has gained on theſe reaſons, the appellation of common ſenſe, though it is of ſuch a determined utility, that none would gain by its exchange for what is called fine ſenſe. And as its operations begin early in life, parents are not liable to miſtake the tendency; but in order to make the moſt of their knowledge, it will be neceſſary to obſerve, that fine ſenſe, when well managed, is better adapted to foſter the higher virtues of the ſoul, than common ſenſe. That the ſame moderation which prevents thoſe who are poſſeſſed of phyſical prudence from falling into great evils, will be obſtacles to their purſuing virtue with any degree of warmth. They will be apt to miſtake the caution of wiſdom for craft, ſubtlety, and deceit; and they will be ſo far from attempting heroic virtue, that without care, their conduct will border on meanneſs. Of ſuch pupils then who ſhow ſymptoms of poſſeſſing the quality

of

of a phyſical prudence, the parent or tutor may reſt ſatisfied on the point of their worldly intereſt; they ought conſequently to poſtpone their lectures on diſcretion, and endeavour to animate their feelings by ſtimulating examples of great and towering virtue, and of thoſe high and diſintereſted parts of conduct, where the nobler paſſions take the lead, and where the intereſts of ſelf, are ſacrificed to equity or to general utility. When the cold inſenſibility of ſuch natures becomes animated, it will be then time enough to inculcate leſſons of moral prudence, which is a very different thing from the quality abovementioned, as it depends on knowledge gained by experience or inſtruction; and is never inimical, but favourable to virtue. For it is the uſe of the underſtanding in regarding all the rules of rectitude, in improving all our accompliſhments and talents, and employing them uſefully to ourſelves and others. It is watchful in attending to the dictates of reaſon, amidſt the clamours of paſſion; and laſtly, it proceeds upon a judicious love of virtue, with ſuch a careful examination of all its intereſts, as to ſuffer no eager purſuits of ſome parts of it to be injurious to others.

There are other characters ſo oppoſite to the naturally prudent, that diſcretion finds no place in their compoſition. Theſe perſons in general have quick and lively parts, great activity of mind, with

with exquiſite ſenſibility; and their ſpirits move with a velocity that deſtroys all that frigidity which is ſo favourable to the operations of the underſtanding. Thus their imagination is liable, not only to be inflamed, but deceived; every impreſſion made on it from external objects, or which ariſes from the action of the mind, is received with a vivacity that muſt be inconceivable to thoſe of ſlower feelings; and their paſſions are always ready to riſe in an uproar, whenever they are ſtimulated by deſire. Theſe characters, when they come under the tuition of very wiſe perſons, or are uncommonly favoured by accident, become of extenſive utility, and riſe to the higheſt fame; but for want of the ſame circumſtances of fortune, they oftener act a mad and a ridiculous part in the world, and become objects of its deriſion and perſecution.

As theſe characters form a contraſt to thoſe who are endowed with the quality of a phyſical prudence, it will be neceſſary to give them a contrary treatment. Inſtead of endeavouring to encreaſe ſenſibility, or exalt the paſſions of the mind, every ſtimulus to deſire ſhould be kept as much out of the way as poſſible, till the underſtanding has had time to ſtrengthen, and till it has gained the habit of exerting its powers: otherwiſe it will be ever borne down by the torrent of paſſion, and kept under by the tyranny of imagination. The mind ſhould

be

be kept active without intenſeneſs. The examples ſet forth for admiration, ſhould be exact pictures of practical imitation. Such an example as Genlis Laggaray would drive theſe inflammable tempers into enthuſiaſm or deſpair. The ſecrets of their heart ſhould be drawn from them by ſuch winning arts of ſeeming confidence, and real tenderneſs, as ſhould induce them to throw off every diſguiſe. Obſervations on the advantage of diſcretion, and the evils which attend temerity, ſhould be made on every opportunity which preſents itſelf; and theſe propoſitions ſhould be variouſly illuſtrated by appoſite examples, drawn from ancient times, from the characters and conduct of acquaintances, and from the ſtories and anecdotes of the preſent day.

In ſuch diſpoſitions as I have juſt now deſcribed, is often engrafted a whimſical turn of imagination, which is ſometimes an attendant on original genius; but which, for want of a proper attention and management, moſt commonly degenerates into the worſt ſpecies of mental diſeaſe, viz. an inſanity, which carrying the appearance of ſoundneſs in all the ordinary tranſactions of life, only ſhews itſelf when the mind is oppreſſed by a combination of unfavourable circumſtances, and gives the colour of criminality to actions which really reſult from the diſordered ſtate of the mental organs.

Children of this caſt commonly ſhow the turn of thier

their diſpoſition early. The follies of childhood are tinctured with ſingularity; their ſpirits flow unequally. Sometimes very high, and low in the ſame proportion, they ſeize every opportunity which the abſence of thoſe they ſtand in awe of preſents, to break through the rules which authority obliges them to follow. They are never left to themſelves without entering into ſome unlucky courſe of action, and this not proceeding from any vicious turn in their affections, but from an irregular imagination, which is ever prompting them to a miſchievous activity. This turn of diſpoſition, in all probability, proceeds from ſome capital defects in the conſtitution, which affect the due circulation of the animal ſpirits, and thoſe finer juices which act on the brain. Thus the imagination grows irregular. Thus the ideas preſented to the mind, loſe their due magnitude, and become liable to diſtortion. The remedy for ſuch evils lies in a ſtrict care of the bodily health, particularly in an attention to the rendering it robuſt and equal. The mind ought to be kept perpetually engaged in thoſe innocent occupations which amuſe without tranſporting. Inſtruction itſelf ſhould wear the face of gaiety. A full confidence ſhould be acquired, ſolitude avoided, and when the time of adoleſcence comes on, very ſtrenuous endeavours ſhould be made to give the

pupil

pupil an inſight into the mechaniſm of the human mind, and the methods of diſciplining it.

Mr. Locke gives ſome directions for the management of the ſlow and inſenſible mind, and Madame Genlis for correcting an indolent one; but I imagine, that the qualities given in theſe three deſcriptions, as they have been placed by me, or as they may be found otherwiſe blended and mixed in the variety which nature produces, give the ſtamp of character to all human beings; and the judgment of the parent or tutor, muſt be guided by their experience, which will teach them to adapt their conduct to the different modifications formed by the various mixtures of theſe qualities, and their different degrees. Fortunately for the happineſs of mankind, inſenſibility is the prevailing feature; and whilſt ſenſibility is often ſacrificed to ignorance and neglect, ſhe boldly treads the ſtage of life, and reſts ſecure in the ſhelter of a torpid conſtitution.

As moſt characters have a leading feature formed from the operations of the governing paſſions, ſo families are frequently marked by the prevalence of ſome one or other of the ſeveral affections. Thus the natural virtues and vices of parents commonly deſcend to their children. It ought therefore to be the taſk of every parent to examine carefully their own character, to find out its propenſities, and to regulate the method of

education in ſuch a manner as ſhall guard particularly againſt the influence of thoſe which they find cenſurable in themſelves, unleſs experience ſhould prove to them, that their children have a contrary tendency.

LETTER

LETTER XVII.

Indiſcretion—Sophiſtry.

AFTER all which has been ſaid of inſtruction, Hortenſia, the moſt uſeful part of education is of the negative kind; but when properly carried into execution, it lays ſuch an irkſome reſtraint on the freedom of converſation, that it is never attended to. A common obſerver muſt be ſufficiently acquainted with the human mind to know, that it is quite paſſive in receiving impreſſions through the organs of ſenſe. I can lay my hands cloſe on my ears, and thus produce a temporary deafneſs; but if I have no natural imperfection of this kind, and keep my ears open, I cannot keep out the ideas which the diſcourſe of others occaſion. No; they will neceſſarily be received by the mind, and laid up in the mental repoſitory, where they will be ready to lead into the train of their aſſociates; when thought is ſet in motion by any turn of the animal circulation favourable to ſuch combinations, or when any correſponding impreſſion is received by the mind; I can ſhut my eyes from ſeeing objects, but I cannot hinder the impreſſions which theſe objects, when they are ſeen, make on my mind. Hence we muſt be

eſteemed paſſive agents in the collection of by far the greater number of the ideas lodged in the ſtorehouſe of the brain; and the purity of the mind muſt chiefly depend on the diſcretion of thoſe with whom we are entruſted in our youth. "If no laſcivious object had ever preſented itſelf to our ſight; if no immodeſt idea had ever entered the mind, ſays Rouſſeau, we ſhould in all probability have remained chaſte, without temptation, and without reſiſtance." Parents, eſpecially fathers, are ſeldom careful in this particular; but even thoſe who are the moſt guarded, do not extend their caution to the ſubject of books, pictures, and the converſation of thoſe with whom they ſuffer their children to aſſociate. But the human mind, ſo capable of being rendered the moſt beautiful being in the mundane creation, is equally liable to injury from the many untoward incidents to which it is often ſubjected, its purity is deſtroyed by the groſſneſs of ſurrounding beings, and its opinions become injurious to its virtue by the follies, ignorance, and the errors of thoſe whom it loves, or whom it is taught to admire and reſpect. Every error thrown out in converſation, every ſentiment which does not correſpond with the true principles of virtue, is received by the mind, and like a drop of venomous poiſon will corrupt the maſs with which it mingles.

Surely, ſays Hortenſia, this is refining to ſuch a height

a height as to make education quite impracticable; for who will ſubmit to lay ſuch a reſtraint on themſelves, as to model their whole converſation according to the tenor of ſuch rules, as muſt even exclude the pleaſures of ſociety. If one was inclined to tame the unruly member which is in our own keeping, it would be impoſſible to bridle the tongues of our aſſociates in ſuch a manner as to prevent impertinencies from perpetually breaking in upon the practice of this theory.

There is a great deal in this obſervation, Hortenſia, and I will ſhow you ſuch a ſingular inſtance of candor, as to acknowledge the weak part of my hypotheſis; but though ſome rules cannot be followed with a literal exactneſs, yet they will always be uſeful if founded on the principles of truth; and this reſtraint on what you call the freedom of converſation would not be found ſo difficult, if the conſciences of men were more governed by reaſon, and leſs by cuſtom and habit, than is commonly the caſe. The abuſe of the great gift of ſpeech, from which all our ſuperiority of being proceeds, is in my opinion, the breach of the moſt eſſential duty in life. For it not only deſtroys purity of mind, and renders our errors contagious to thoſe with whom we converſe, but it is a great obſtacle to the univerſality of the moſt important parts of knowledge; for truth does not lie ſo deep in the well, as to be beyond the ken of the atten-

tive and ſagacious obſerver; and on theſe reaſons, the opinions of men of ſenſe and thinking have a greater ſameneſs than they often chuſe to acknowledge.

When Mr. Boſwell was expatiating on the beauties and advantages of the Gothic inſtitutions, he was anſwered by his friend Dr. Samuel Johnſon, that they were indeed happy for the chiefs; and as the Doctor very properly limited their bleſſings to ſo ſmall a part of ſociety, it was as ſtrong a ſarcaſm as could be made againſt all the political opinions he had himſelf adopted, and warmly defended both in print and converſation. Had the Doctor not unfortunately taken it into his head, that he could with innocence play the ſophiſt for victory in converſation, he would have been a much more uſeful member of ſociety than he really was, and his fame might perhaps have been greater: for truth, when defended with ſkill and vigour, throws a luſtre on the combatant, which error cannot do. Had the niceneſs of his conſcience led him to guard againſt theſe breaches of integrity, had he only uſed his great abilities in the inveſtigating and illuſtrating truth, inſtead of confounding the reaſon of others, he might, perhaps, in the courſe of his enquiries, have corrected in himſelf, and in thoſe who enjoyed the happineſs of his converſation, many fond errors aken up in haſte, and defended from motives of vanity.

vanity. But before I have done with this extraordinary man who has made ſuch a noiſe in the literary world, and whoſe abilities I always reſpected, I ſhall relate to you a circumſtance of converſation which happened between him and me, and which at the time it paſſed, I regarded as too trifling for notice, but which has been thought worth relating, with additions quite foreign to the ſimplicity of the circumſtance as it really exiſted.

Dr. Johnſon was ſitting by me at the coffee-table whilſt I was making this liquor, of which he was very fond. In the courſe of converſation, a topic, which had been debated at dinner, was renewed, and on which, I muſt acknowledge, I had uſed ſome arguments againſt political diſtinctions. Why, ſays the Doctor, in one of his replies, do you not aſk your ſervant to ſit down with us, inſtead of ſuffering him to wait? Doctor, ſaid I, you ſeem to miſtake the whole bent of my reaſoning; I was not arguing againſt that inequality of property which muſt more or leſs take place in all ſocieties, and which actually occaſions the difference that now exiſts between me and my ſervant; I was ſpeaking only of political diſtinctions; a difference which actually does not exiſt between us, for I know of no diſtinctions of that kind which any of the commoners of England poſſeſs. Was my ſervant obliged to ſerve me without a pecuniary conſideration, by virtue of any political privi-

lege annexed to my ſtation, there would be ſome propriety in your remark. This manner of treating the queſtion, ſhews, that Doctor Johnſon would argue looſely and inaccurately when he thought he had a feeble antagoniſt; and that victory, not truth, was too often the thing ſought after. However, the oppoſition of opinion between us paſſed off with great good humour on both ſides. The reſt of the company were engaged in converſation in another part of the room; nor was the ſervant preſent who was mentioned in the argument. But to return to our ſubject, from which this anecdote has carried us.

That wrangling diſpoſition, that readineſs to oppoſe the ſentiments and opinions of others, and to engraft our fame not on having illuſtrated ſome uſeful truth, but in the defeat of an antagoniſt, even at the expence of our integrity, like all other vices, lies in the defects of education. Logic, which is undoubtedly a neceſſary part of tuition, as it can alone enable us to defend ourſelves againſt the wiles of ſophiſtry, will neceſſarily make us adepts in the defence of error.

The abuſe of this ſcience is abſolutely encouraged in the ſchools, in order to accuſtom pupils to manage their weapons with dexterity. In the practice of the bar, its abuſe is attended with flowing fees; and as the applauſe and reſpect of ſociety

ciety is ſure to attend thoſe diſputants, who with a torrent of words, and a ſpecious arrangement of arguments can bear down all oppoſition, and give a ſhow of reaſon and truth to propoſitions, which are the moſt deſtitute of either; it tempts the vanity of youth to enter the liſts on every opportunity that offers; and to aſpire after the victor's crown, though at the expence of honeſty and integrity. Hence all convivial meetings are either ſpent in the dull unmeaning jargon of faſhionable life, or changed from the purport of innocent and improving converſation, exhibit no ſuch friendly intercourſe of ſentiments and opinions, as may be found where every man in the ſimplicity of his mind and the integrity of his heart, furniſhes his quota of acquired knowledge. Yes, Hortenſia; in the attic entertainments of theſe days, a pert vivacious quickneſs carries away the triumphs due to wit; a ſarcaſtic cenſoriouſneſs takes the place of honeſt ſatire; and ſophiſtry, the moſt deteſtable of all human arts, finds in the applauſe of fools and knaves, a reward for the abuſe of reaſon, and the injury of truth.

To prevent young perſons from falling into theſe depravities, we muſt endeavour to convince them that true wit is ever on the ſide of good nature and virtue; and that honeſt ſatire never wounds but with a view to amend. We muſt inform them, that ſublime geniuſes, though they perceive the ridicule

ridicule of things, do not delight in it; for truth and beauty are their purſuits. We muſt by example, as well as precept, diſcourage every attempt to ill natured raillery and cenſure. Inſtead of beſtowing laviſh praiſe on our pupils for conducting themſelves with addreſs in their debates, we muſt meaſure our approbation by the importance of the truths they have defended. We muſt expatiate on the beauty of that modeſty and gentleneſs in youth, which makes them backward in contradicting, except where the intereſts of truth demand their interpoſition. We muſt give a critical attention to the manner of their conducting debates, and reprove or commend in proportion as they have ſhewed patience in attending to the arguments of their opponents; as they have ſhewed ſoftneſs, or the contrary, in the words they have made uſe of, or as civility and good will, or rudeneſs and diſreſpect, have prevailed in the tenor of their deportment.

The laſt objection which you made to my hypotheſis, carries more weight with it than that which we have juſt diſcourſed on, and which I hope I have in ſome meaſure removed; for though difficult, it is poſſible to bridle our own tongue, but it is impoſſible to bridle thoſe of others; for this reaſon we will not attempt it my friend; we will content ourſelves with making ſuch animadverſions on ſentiments and opinions that we diſ-

approve, as ſhall in a great meaſure deſtroy their poiſon; for it is the fault of parents and tutors, if their authority has not an implicit ſway over the affectionate and credulous minds of their young pupils. But ſay you, it is not always in the power of parents to attend their children, and much miſchief may be done in their abſence by the ignorance and inattention of thoſe about them. It is certain, that this may be the caſe with people of moderate fortunes, who are much engaged in the buſtle and buſineſs of life; but as it is only the opulent who can bring education to its utmoſt point of perfection, it is of theſe only I ſpeak, and their fortune enables them to put proper characters about their children, and to chuſe perſons for governors and governantes, in whoſe ſobriety, diſcretion, and wiſdom, they can put a full confidence, and who will effectually ſecond their endeavours to promote the virtue and felicity of their offspring.

LETTER

LETTER XVIII.

Politeneſs—Faſhion—Sobriety—Perſonal Beauty.

HAVING laid the foundation of the rational politeneſs of my pupils, Hortenſia, in the cultivation of an extenſive benevolence, I ſhall leave the exterior part of it which partakes of a more mutable quality, and may be termed the grimace of the day, to the converſation of the faſhionable world. But with this caution, that young perſons ſhould be guarded againſt entertaining ſuch a high idea of theſe exteriors, and their indiſpenſableneſs in the carriage of a gentleman, as to make them fearful of giving way to the flowing civility of the mind, leſt it ſhould induce awkwardneſs: or leſt it ſhould not accord with the general rule; for I contend, that all originals are better than copies; that the polite exterior of the faſhionable world is only a copy of virtues, which too often find no place in the acting characters, and conſequently is liable to change into a determined rudeneſs whenever motives of caprice or vanity intervene. I have ſeen theſe faſhionable people, who ſet up for models of politeneſs, comport themſelves with an inſolence which muſt give pain to every feeling mind,

mind, and which conſequently never would be affected by the truly benevolent, whoſe conduct is ſtudiouſly directed to the ſpreading and encreaſing happineſs and enjoyment.

In a ſyſtem of education, which aims at bringing the human mind to ſuch a height of perfection as ſhall induce the practice of the beſt morals, the ſubject of dreſs cannot paſs unnoticed: to be too ſtrict in this matter, would be giving birth to ſingularity, and ſingularity is not the offspring of judgment, or it would give diſguſt to the young mind, and incline it to regard the paths of folly as more pleaſant than the paths of wiſdom. For theſe reaſons, I would confine my admonitions on this article to the avoiding the extremes of faſhion, which always ſhew little taſte and leſs judgment; and alſo to avoiding great expence of time or money, which indicates a mind vain, trifling, and oſtentatious. Your dreſs, ſays the good Conſtantia to her neice, the gay and beautiful Narciſſa, is in ſo elaborate a ſtile and ſo exactly adapted to ſet off the charms of your perſon, that one would think it had been the chief object of your thoughts ever ſince I had the pleaſure of ſeeing you laſt, which I think is at leaſt ſix months ago. But my dear, are you not afraid that thoſe, who are judges of the human character, and the reaſon of things, will leſſen their eſteem for the virtues of your mind, in the ſame proportion as their admi-

ration is raiſed at your external appearance? Can you flatter yourſelf, that you can paſs for the firſt-rate dreſſer in the faſhionable world, without being liable to the animadverſions of the wife, in the ſame manner as Anniceris of Cyrene experienced from the philoſopher Plato? As I believe you are not acquainted with this anecdote in literature, if you will give me your attention, I will relate it to you. Anniceris, who was eminent for birth and ingenuity, but who valued himſelf above all things for his ſkill in charioteering, had a mind to ſhew his dexterity in Plato's preſence. For this purpoſe, a chariot was brought into the area belonging to the academy. Anniceris performed wonders, and was extolled by the ſpectators to the ſkies; but Plato, who had a maxim that there was nothing more unworthy a wiſe man than to have allowed more time for unneceſſary and trifling things than they deſerved, ſeriouſly blamed the youth, and told him it was not poſſible but that he who had ſpent ſo much time in ſo vain and inconſiderable a matter muſt needs have neglected other things that were very neceſſary and important; and that a mind entirely taken up with ſuch trifles, could not be capable of applying itſelf to any thing valuable and truly worthy of admiration.

The advantages in the capital points of preſerving the innocence, the modeſty, and the virtue of youth, which a private education, when conducted

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on the beſt principles, and according to the beſt rules, poſſeſſes over a public one, has I hope been conſpicuous in my former letters. But its pre-eminence can never be ſeen in its true magnitude, except where the judgment, the genius, and the virtues of the tutor bear ſome proportion to the importance and the difficulties of his taſk. A tutor merely honeſt, would content himſelf with reading to his pupil lectures on the beauty of ſobriety, and its handmaid modeſty. When warning him againſt intemperance, he would perhaps, take occaſion to introduce the following ſentiment of Antoninus; that it was a greater debaſement to be overcome with pleaſure than anger; he would inſiſt on the impoſſibility of enjoying the nobler virtues of the mind under the empire of ſenſuality; he would inſiſt on the debaſing ſervitude to which craving appetites and ſtrong paſſions ſubject us to the perſon from whom we expect the gratification of our deſires; he would argue on the folly of thoſe who indulge one deſire to the croſſing of many others; he would ſhew that pleaſure is a deceitful guide to happineſs, becauſe the one conſiſts in an aggregate of ſatisfactions, and that the other fixes our eyes upon a ſingle point, without taking into conſideration the means which lead to this aggregate. He would in ſhort, uſe every argument which his own good ſenſe, and the good ſenſe of others have furniſhed,

niſhed, to point out the various ills which ariſe from licentiouſneſs, and the important intereſts which muſt be ſacrificed at its ſhrine; and in the docile mind, his lectures would give riſe to many good reſolutions, favourable to the views of the tutor. But the man, who to a perfect honeſty, united a competent knowledge of the human mind, and of thoſe cauſes which have the moſt irreſiſtable influence on its motions, would endeavour to enliſt them in its ſervice: he would reflect on the power of perſonal charms over even the rigid and experienced mind; and his reflections would lead him to examine into the nature of a power which ſeemed to ſet at defiance all oppoſition, founded either in judgment, principle, or habit. In the courſe of his enquiries, he would perceive that this power, though ſteady in its influence in all climes, in all ages, and in all ſocieties, was a very Proteus in the various ſhapes it aſſumed to catch the unwary.

He would recollect how oppoſite were the Venuſes and the Adoniſes of the African ſhores, both in colour, figure, and form of feature to the brilliant beauties of Europe. If a flat noſe and its contrary, he would ſay to himſelf, if both little and large eyes, if a black or white complexion, in ſhort, if one form is conſidered as beauty by one, aad its reverſe is conſidered it the ſame light by another; beauty, as it affects the human mind has

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no poſitive quality, but depends entirely on firſt prejudices. Yes; children readily apply expreſſions of affection or averſion, of approbation or reſentment; and when theſe expreſſions are once connected by the ſame aſſociations which connect words with their ideas, the ſentiment will follow the idea, and attend upon the object to which the child has been accuſtomed to apply the epithet. This, and no other, is in general the origin of good or bad, handſome or ugly, and ſo on through all the differences which the mind makes of the various beings with which it is affected. Hence moral ſenſe proceeds, and hence thoſe trains of affections, which with the exception of ſome eccentric beings, govern the human character through the whole courſe of its conduct. Our philoſophic tutor, Hortenſia, having brought his ſpeculations to this concluſion, will determine to adapt his practice to his theory, and endeavour to raiſe ſuch an idea of perſonal beauty in his pupil's mind, as ſhall forward the purpoſes of virtue, inſtead of endangering its exiſtence. When the converſation turns on thoſe ſubjects, he will diſcountenance all high panegyric on colour, ſize, ſhape, limb, and feature; but he will ſtudiouſly endeavour to make his pupil an adept in the judgment of expreſſion. Whenever the amiable qualities of the mind are diſcerned to brighten the countenance, whenever the virtues of the heart are to be

ſeen in the expreſſive eye, and play upon the features; he will point out the moral beauty as a fit object for admiration; and as the idea of beauty is often raiſed in the mind by tranſlation, i. e. whatever has been the occaſion of much and frequent ſatisfaction, becomes agreeable in our eyes; ſatisfaction being transferred from the effect to the cauſe, he will manage the courſe of his obſervations in ſuch a manner, as to take the full advantage of this circumſtance; he will always annex the epithets of beautiful, charming, and lovely, to good actions; and of hideous, frightful, and deformed, to evil ones. Thus the ſame means, which, in the courſe of common converſation and writing, acts to the raiſing an enthuſiaſm for external beauty, will by the policy of this Mentor be turned to the raiſing an enthuſiaſm for that excellence, which alone bears a reſemblance to the ſovereign beauty. Thus the maxim of the Stoics, that the wiſe man alone is beautiful, will in ſome meaſure be felt in ſentiment. Thus an aſſociation of ideas will prevail, which will ſerve to weaken the power of mere perſonal charms. Thus the affections of the heart will not ſo often war againſt the admonitions of the underſtanding, and thus connections will not be ſo liable to be formed, where the depravities of one of the parties act to the deſtruction of the felicity and virtue of the other.

Nor will you, Hortenſia, regard this as a refinement

finement in ſpeculation, which never can be found uſeful in practice; when you conſider that women, who do not indulge ſo much as men in talking on the ſubject of perſonal beauty, and conſequently have imaginations leſs inflamed on this particular, often fall in love for the mere qualities of the mind. Courage, generoſity, or any quality which they regard as excellent, are, in women, often found the ſole motives of attachment, even when united with a homely form. And as the organs of ſenſe are the ſame in both ſexes, and conſequently their perceptions, this difference which exiſts between them, can only ariſe from a different combination in their ideas.

LETTER XIX.

Secrecy—Flattery—Modeſty—Selfiſhneſs.

SECRECY, is ſo eſſential a part of diſcretion, Hortenſia, that thoſe characters who are endowed with the quality of a phyſical prudence, are ſeldom inclined to the weakneſs of telling their own ſecrets: and as the powers of their minds are chiefly directed to the improving their opportunities and the keeping out of ſcrapes, they are equally cautious of betraying the confidence of others. But thoſe lively animated beings, who give way to the preſent feeling without any conſideration of conſequences, have a frankneſs and an openneſs of temper which incline them to admit all men into their liſt of confidants, eſpecially thoſe perſons who carry the ſame appearance of levity. For truſt is regarded as a neceſſary return for confidence received, which is often given with deſign; and when it is even attended with ſincerity, it ought in reaſon to put us on our guard; for he who cannot keep his own ſecrets, is of all men the moſt unfit to be truſted with thoſe of others. Indeed, were weakneſs and ſelfiſhneſs leſs conſpicuous in the conduct of man, true wiſdom would

would never commit that to the care of others, which comes within the reach of its own powers. Whilſt the knowledge of a fact is locked up in my own breaſt, I am ſure of its ſafety; but if I give the key to another, its ſafety muſt depend upon circumſtances in which my conduct has no concern. Beſide, the throwing out on all occaſions our ſentiments, opinions, and knowledge of facts, induces ſuch habits of intemperance in the article of ſpeech, as muſt ſerve to render us often ridiculous, and in the courſe of life become very injurious to our intereſts and our peace. It ought therefore for theſe reaſons, to be one of the principal cares of education, to guard againſt an indiſcreet loquacity. When young perſons repeat any thing that has been ſaid in the courſe of converſation, which may probably be attended with any diſagreeable conſequence to the ſpeaker, or to any other perſon, they ought to be reproved, as having tranſgreſſed the laws of friendly intercourſe, and the great rule of acting to others as we would be acted by. They ſhould be told, that the indiſcretions of the giddy and the unwiſe, ought to find impunity in the boſom of ſuperior wiſdom. That ſuch a line of conduct cannot fail of procuring univerſal confidence, than which nothing is more agreeable to a chaſte ambition, as it opens the door for rendering the ſervices of an individual generally uſeful. That it is alſo attended

with that peace of mind and internal ſatisfaction, which ever accompanies ſelf complacency and innocence; and that the great defect of general conduct in this particular, ought to be a ſtimulus to thoſe who aim at reaching a higher mark of excellence, than what is ſet forth in vulgar example. When a young perſon has attained ſuch a command over himſelf as to render taciturnity eaſy to him, it will not be difficult to induce habits of caution in important points; eſpecially if they are from time to time truſted by their parents and tutors with tranſactions which carry the appearance of ſecrets. If they are treated with proper contempt on any breach of confidence, and if they are not ſuffered to enter into any of thoſe fooliſh intercourſes between young perſons of different families, which go under the name of friendſhip, but which is commonly no other than a maſk for intrigue, and the ſource of corruption to the parties thus united.

The voice of panegyric, when enliſted in our ſervice, and raiſed to extol our merits and heighten our puny virtues into gigantic forms, is ſo pleaſing to ſelf love, that the wiſeſt perſons indulge in the ſweets of flattery, and encourage paraſites under the plauſible pretext, that their friendly inclinations to the objects of their praiſe is apt to deceive their judgment. What ſignifies proteſting ſo againſt flattery, ſaid that eminent moraliſt, Dr. Johnſon;

Johnſon; if a perſon ſpeaks well of one, it muſt be either true or falſe; if true, let us rejoice in his good opinon; if he lies, it is a proof at leaſt that he loves to pleaſe me. I have heard the ſame ſentiment in the mouth of ſeveral people, who have thus endeavoured to cover the nakedneſs of vanity with the flowing mantle of gratitude, and excuſe their predilection to men who are the peſts of ſociety, and who are in general the prime cauſes of all the baſe, diſhonorable, and ridiculous modes of conduct, which take place in the world. As the great and the diſtinguiſhed are always ſurrounded with ſuch vipers, the moſt aſſiduous attention ought to be uſed to guard youths of fortune againſt the attractive bait of flattery. When the virtues or growing graces of our pupils are praiſed in modeſt terms, we ought to join in the commendation; for it is unjuſt to deny our approbation to actions and talents which deſerve it. But whenever expreſſion grows laviſh and adulatory, we ſhould make our pupils aſhamed of the compliments which have been paid them, by ſuch obſervations as the following: certainly, my young friend, would I ſay to a pupil whoſe ears had been tickled with the pleaſing ſounds of high and lofty panegyric, that man with whom we have been juſt converſing, either has not ſufficient ſenſe to adapt his expreſſions to his ſentiments, or his ſentiments greatly exceed the true magnitude of

things, or he takes you for a fool, and wants to divert himſelf at your expence. You muſt have perceived the exceſs of his commendations, for I am ſure you did not believe what he ſaid; no, in all probability he does not believe it himſelf, and he uſes theſe exaggerated terms only becauſe he thinks you weak and vain enough to be impoſed on by praiſes which bear no proportion to your merits.

Thus, if every opportunity was taken to connect an idea of diſgrace with exceſſive praiſe, ſuch aſſociations, formed in youth, would continue through life, flattery would loſe its reliſh, and flatterers be no longer the bane of incautious virtue.

The pleaſure of relating any ſtory or anecdote in which we have ourſelves borne the principal part, is a ſatisfaction that is ſeldom neglected, when opportunity favours its enjoyment; but as all ſuch habits only ſerve to render perſons ridiculous and tireſome to thoſe with whom they converſe, and to foſter vain glorious ſentiments, timely care ſhould be taken to correct this propenſity; and when children relate any tranſaction in which they are concerned, the tutor ſhould obſerve, whether they had mentioned themſelves with oſtentation, or oftener than the courſe of their tale obliged them to do: if the contrary had been the caſe, they ſhould be commended for their modeſty; but if they have ſhewn a fondneſs to dwell on thoſe parts of the ſtory which magnify

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their own exploits, they ſhould be reminded of their error, and told, that in the judgment of wiſe perſons, their oſtentation would weigh down the merit of thoſe actions they were ſo forward to relate; and that the appearance of modeſty is ſo neceſſary to guard virtue againſt the rancour of envy, that where the reality is wanting, it is always affected by thoſe who underſtand well the human character, and the way to conciliate the affections of mankind.

It has been advanced by ſeveral writers who have ſhewn conſiderable talents in the art of education, that it is dangerous to deſcribe to pupils the human character, as it is daily exhibited on the ſtage of life, and that the faireſt ſide of the world ſhould be preſented for ſpeculation. But I do not think that deceit can ever be practiſed with ſucceſs in education; and that this above all others will be found a miſchievous miſtake, becauſe it excludes the great leſſon of moral prudence from tuition, and leaves the enlightening of the pupil's mind on this important ſubject to the dangerous means of experience.

It is the duty of the tutor, to do as much himſelf, and to leave as little for the exertion of his pupil as he poſſibly can; and in order to give him the wiſdom of the ſerpent, as well as the harmleſſneſs of the dove, it will be neceſſary not to conceal the vices of others, but to convince his judg-

judgment, that the ſuperiority of happineſs lies greatly on the ſide of virtue. He ſhould be taught to conſider mankind as they really are, in maſquerade; and that every one is puſhing thoſe points which he regards as advantageous to his own intereſt, without any attention to the ſacrifice he is making of the happineſs of others. That on theſe reaſons, virtue, when ſeparated from caution, often miſſes its rewards; and that the want of moral wiſdom is more certain of being puniſhed in this world, than the want of rectitude. But I would not have you believe, Hortenſia, that by ſuch intimations I intend to taint my pupil's mind with Mandeville's doctrine of a conſtitutional depravity in man; on the contrary, I ſhall inſiſt, that God has made man capable of arriving at a high degree of perfection; but that the progreſs we make to excellence muſt needs be ſlow, as it ſolely depends on experience, and is liable to interruption from ignorance and paſſion. You, my friend, I would ſay; you, who have been taught by habit and inſtruction to poiſe your deſires in ſuch a manner as to leave your underſtanding in the full poſſeſſion of the field; you, who have been inſtructed in the mechaniſm of the human mind, and the dangers which attend on ignorance, will entertain a high degree of compaſſion for beings whoſe felicity depends, not on themſelves, but on the courſe of thoſe accidents which

attend

attend them. Yes, my child, your education has entirely exempted you from that fever of the mind which ſeems to infect all thoſe who are not engaged in the laborious paths of life; do you not ſee how the goods of fortune are abſolutely turned into grievances by theſe changlings, who, whilſt they are uſing diſhoneſt and illiberal means to encreaſe their advantages, are only laying new burdens on themſelves? Alas! it is their eternal uneaſineſs which puts them in action, and makes them ſeek happineſs in every mode in which it is repreſented by a fantaſtic imagination, and a vitiated taſte. You will, I hope, always entertain the ſame benevolent ſentiments; but let them ever be mixed with ſuch a proper reſpect for your own opinions as to make you guard againſt any imitation of the follies of public ſentiment, which a ſmall degree of obſervation will ſhew you to be totally inconſiſtent, and ever verging towards thoſe extremes, where folly loves to dwell. No; you have been taught right and wrong, on the firm baſis of eternal truth; your principles then, can neither be liable to mutability, or inconſiſtency; not ſo the opinions of the world, nor the laws by which it governs itſelf; and I hope you will always carry in your mind thoſe diſtinctions which I have endeavoured to impreſs on it; for on thoſe diſtinctions your wiſdom and your utility in ſociety chiefly depend. Follow thoſe laws which your

enlightened reaſon dictates on a principle of conſcience, and extend their influence as far as opportunity will permit. But follow thoſe laws which have no better grounds than the authority of ſociety, on the principle of prudence only, whoſe obligations will ever be binding on the truly wiſe.

LETTER

LETTER XX.

Sympathy.

LIFE ſhould be a continued effort to baniſh our prejudices, and extinguiſh our vices, ſaid the wiſe Alcander to his pupil Lyſimachus, as they were ſitting on the banks of a beautiful rivulet which commanded a large extent of the adjacent country. Look at thoſe ſportſmen, who are ſo intent on running down an innocent animal, and who are cutting the thread of an exiſtence which was given for enjoyment, in ſuch a manner, as to combine a high degree of mental with bodily pain. I know, my dear Lyſimachus, that your ſentiments are ſimilar to my own, and that by the power of ſympathy, you actually partake of ſome of that miſery which at this moment you ſee overwhelming a fellow creature. But theſe ſportſmen are conſtituted of the ſame materials as ourſelves; they have the ſame portion of ſympathy given them by nature; and they, like us, are equally ſubject with the creature they are thus purſuing, to pain, to death, and to all the agonizing ſenſations which ariſe from exceſſive fear. They are, I dare ſay, honourable men too; they believe

believe that they would ſcorn to effect the deſtruction of a fellow man with ſuch exceſſive odds; and if you were to tell them that it was poſſible for them in any given ſituation of power, and prejudice, to uſe the ſame cruel violence againſt one of their own ſpecies, they would regard you as an abuſive defamer. But this, Lyſimachus, is an error; there are no ſuch partialities in nature exiſting between the ſame ſpecies of animals. Beaſts of prey do not devour one another, becauſe, for wiſe purpoſes, they have an inſtinctive averſion to ſuch food; but you ſee, when their appetites are in motion, they will deſtroy one another in conteſts for gratification. Where this inſtinct is weaker, there are ſome animals who actually eat their own young. Man, in the early ages of ſociety, fed on man; and there is no violence which this being, who boaſts that he is governed by reaſon, has not committed againſt his own ſpecies, whenever they have been found in oppoſition to his fancied intereſt. What atrocious cruelties has not pride, the luſt of power, riches, beauty, and the dire paſſion of revenge, given birth to; and even where theſe keen excitements have been wanting, the mere inſolence of ſuperiority, and the force of habit, have given birth to injuries ſimilar to thoſe now ſuffering by this hare. Not to mention the treatment given by ſome of own countrymen to their African ſlaves; the

Spartans

Spartans, a race of men not deſtitute of the qualities of the heart, actually hunted the Helotes in their ſports. If men, Lyſimachus, neglect to cultivate ſympathy, which enables us to acquire notions of equity, and thus to trace the virtues of the ſovereign mind, that quality in them, which carries the appearance of benevolence, is the mere power of habit. Not that I mean to inſinuate that ſportſmen are incapable of tender ſentiment; no; when natural ſympathy is not quite ſubdued, where habits are favorable to its exertion, it will riſe and command attention. We boaſt much of modern refinements and civilization; but I know of none that is worth the poſſeſſing except thoſe which induce a more extenſive benevolence than was formerly practiſed amongſt men. For if ſuch appear to our advantage in the comparative line of reaſoning, they never will amount to poſitive excellence till all our barbarous cuſtoms are aboliſhed, and our ſentiments change their heterogeneous nature for a more conſiſtent ſyſtem of feeling.—Truly, ſays Lyſimachus, I have often wondered that Plato, who was ſo deep a thinker, ſhould have founded the rectitude of actions in human ſentiment; for theſe appear ſo liable to take their turn from the operation of cauſes under the controul of accident, that it is impoſſible to affix any idea of conſiſtency or immutability to them.—You certainly are in the right, returned Alcander,

Alcander, and Plato could never have deviated into this error, had not his attention been ſo much fixed on the contemplation of the governing mind, as to make him look over the confuſion and contradiction which take place in human ſentiment. But whilſt one ſmiles at the rhapſodies of thoſe who perhaps have carried Plato's idea farther than it was carried by the philoſopher, we cannot help feeling a little angry with ſyſtems, which confine rectitude to that mode of conduct which is the beſt adapted to ſupport the happineſs of man. Thus, when God ſubjected the far greater number of his creatures to this lord of the creation, he ſubjected them to a being, not bound by any tie in nature, or the reaſon of things, to uſe equity and mercy in the exerciſe of his power; and to whoſe neceſſary wants are added all the excitements which ariſe from a whimſical, depraved, and luxuriant imagination. Abſurd as is this opinion, Lyſimachus, it has been ſupported by the great Mr. Hume, who ſays, he does not know by what principle the brutes can claim juſtice, which is another name for mercy, at our hands. But the difficulties which confound theſe reaſoners, lie in their founding rectitude on a principle of utility, and then in confining utility to the benefit of their own ſpecies. But as utility, unleſs taken in a very general ſenſe, is liable to miſlead the judgment, every rule of human ſociety, founded on partial, and even miſtaken

miſtaken views of intereſt, with the ſentiment to which it gives riſe, finds its juſtification on the plea of utility; and Mr. Hume's ſpeculations on this ſubject are not free from the ſame errors. Thus inconſiſtency and mutability hang on his ſyſtem, in the ſame proportion as they hang on every ſyſtem of morals founded on human ſentiment; but if we take utility in a general ſenſe, and ſay that virtue conſiſts in that conduct which is of general utility, we ſhall come to thoſe eſſential differences which regulate the divine œconomy, only with this diſtinction, that man muſt confine himſelf to what is general; it is omnipotence alone can extend to what is univerſal.

As the diſcerning the difference of human actions, (ſays Lyſimachus,) as far as it reſpects rectitude and its contrary, is ſo neceſſary to virtue, I have often wondered that the reaſon of man, in the common proportion in which it is enjoyed, ſhould be ſo unequal to the taſk.

Reaſon is not ſo unequal to this taſk as you think, Lyſimachus, (replied Alcander;) ſhe may indeed be confounded by ſophiſtry, borne down by authority, or led into erroneous concluſions from falſe ſtatements of facts, and falſe poſitions; but reaſon is always able to diſcern the moral difference of things, whenever they are fairly and plainly propoſed; which, as I take it, eſtabliſhes an immutable and abſtract fitneſs in a more ſatis-

factory manner than what is called a moral conſciouſneſs from innate principles, which would create a jealouſy in the mind of the deep thinker, that it has no grounds inſeparable from power; but it is an arbitrary law impoſed on our nature, for the purpoſe of a providential government.

Your obſervations (ſays Lyſimachus) are too juſtly grounded, and too ſtrongly enforced, not to carry perſuaſion to the unprejudiced mind. But, my dear tutor, how ſhall we account for the total ſilence on this intereſting ſubject, which reigns through all the ſacred writings. Had a benevolent conduct to the brute animals been ſo eſſential a part of moral duty as you ſeem to make it, ought we not to expect to have found it enforced either in the precepts of the old or the new law?

What you ſay, (replied Alcander,) demands a very ſerious attention; and, to tell you the truth, I have myſelf been puzzled with this difficulty. However, we find that mercy is recommended, either directly, or by implication, in the tenor of ſcripture. Revealed religion does not undertake to teach a comprehenſive ſyſtem of ethicks to man; much is left to the progreſs of enlightened reaſon; nor ought this œconomy to ſurprize us, when we conſider that the long enumeration of caſes, and the diſtinctions which muſt have been uſed in order to give preciſion and clearneſs to the ſyſtem, would rather have puzzled than improved the common

mon ſenſe of mankind. Religion would have been regarded as too complex a ſcience for the vulgar claſs of men to underſtand; and that myſtery has been flung by the crafty over the moſt ſimple propoſitions, and idolatry grown from diſtinctions founded on reaſon and truth, the hiſtory both of Paganiſm and Chriſtianity bear ample teſtimony. Had any preciſe rules been given as to the ſubject on which we have been juſt diſcourſing, it would, above all others, have been liable to have been miſunderſtood; and either have occaſioned an open violation of the divine commandment, or have given ſuch a turn to principle and ſentiment as might have interfered with ſuch a uſe of the creatures, as religion, rectitude, and reaſon, allow. But I am perſuaded, Lyſimachus, of the advantage of an univerſal benevolence in every ſtate of creation, and regard it as the beſt means to procure our happineſs, both in the ſatisfaction which is naturally annexed to it, and in the rendering us acceptable to our maker. For, without preſuming to ſet bounds to the goodneſs of God, or the meaſure in which he may deviate from the common courſe of things in favour of thoſe who are deceived into error from the joint influence of authority and cuſtom, we may venture to conclude, that thoſe who are the moſt active in ſpreading happineſs, and who abſtain the moſt from all unneceſſary acts of blood, as well as cruelty, bid

the faireſt for rendering themſelves fit for the enjoyments of a better ſtate.

I have ever found too much indulgence from you, Alcander, to heſitate in giving you my thoughts freely on every ſubject; and I confeſs to you, that there is one objection to be made againſt your argument, which has great weight with me; that line of deſtruction which runs through all animal nature appears to militate ſtrongly againſt the ſuppoſition, that the ſlaughter of the brute ſpecies by man is contrary to the intention of Providence, or repugnant to the divine mind.

Continue, Lyſimachus, (returned Alcander) to uſe that freedom which I have ever encouraged in you; becauſe it is favourable to the inveſtigation of truth; nor am I ſurprized at the weight which this objection has on your mind. That line of deſtruction which regularly runs through all animal nature, is a phenomenon the moſt difficult to be accounted for of any which the divine œconomy preſents. But though the deſtruction of animal by animal is not only admitted by God, but is an univerſal principle in the mundane ſyſtem, it does not follow that ſlaughter ſhould be the delight and amuſement of the human mind. A cat worries its prey, without conſidering whether ſhe is doing evil, or the contrary; but man has ſympathy in his nature, and his knowledge of the relation of things cauſes him to put himſelf in

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the place of the ſufferer, and thus to acquire ideas of equity, and the utility of benevolence, which, as far as it is improved, will carry us in an oppoſite line from cruelty, or unneceſſary ſlaughter. And you ſee, Lyſimachus, that my arguments do not tend to deprive men of a moderate uſe of the creatures; they only militate againſt unneceſſary rigor, or making the death of our fellow animals part of our amuſement. And this view of the queſtion will appear to be warranted by the ſanction of the divine mind, if we take into conſideration the uninterrupted flow of gentle ſatisfactions which attend benevolence in its moſt liberal and extenſive practice.

The dialogue between Alcander and his pupil, Hortenſia, coincides exactly with my opinion on the ſubject of inſtruction; and, on theſe reaſons, I have tranſcribed it for your uſe.

LETTER XXI.

Morals muſt be taught on immutable Principles.

IT is one thing, Hortenſia, to educate a citizen, and another to educate a philoſopher. The mere citizen will have learnt to obey the laws of his country, but he will never underſtand thoſe principles on which all laws ought to be eſtabliſhed; and without ſuch an underſtanding, he can never be religious on rational principles, or truly moral; nor will he ever have any of that active wiſdom which is neceſſary for co-operating in any plan of reformation. But to teach morals on an immutable fitneſs, has never been the practice in any ſyſtem of education yet extant. Hence all our notions of right and wrong are looſe, unconnected, and inconſiſtent. Hence the murderer, in one ſituation, is extolled to the ſkies; and, in another, is followed with reproach even beyond the grave. For it is not only the man of the world who idoliſes power, though in the garb of villainy, and perſecutes diſhoneſty when united to weakneſs, but even thoſe who bear the ſpecious title of philoſophers are apt to be dazzled with the brilliancy of ſucceſs, and to treat qualities

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and characters differently, according to the ſmiles or frowns of fortune.

As an inſtance, to illuſtrate this obſervation, I will ſelect out of the huge maſs of human inconſiſtencies, the praiſes beſtowed by Xenophon on Cyrus; who, whether a real or fictitious character, is ſet up by this philoſopher as a model of princely perfection.

Cyrus, it is true, is repreſented as moderate in the gratification of his appetites, liberal to his followers, and juſt, when he found juſtice correſpond with his intereſt; but, as himſelf confeſſes, he never practiced any virtue on other principles but thoſe of perſonal utility; and he animates his countrymen to exertions, which he dignifies with this title, on motives of obtaining means, by the ſpoils of others, for future enjoyment. In ſhort, Cyrus was neither liberal from generoſity, juſt from honeſty, nor merciful from benevolence; and the addreſs he made uſe of to enſlave the minds of his ſubjects, is of the ſame kind as that uſed by a courtezan to extend and preſerve her influence over the hearts of thoſe ſhe has trepanned into her ſnares. Cyrus was maſter of all thoſe arts which are neceſſary to obtain and preſerve to himſelf and ſucceſſors an unjuſt meaſure of power; he enflamed with this luſt all his warlike followers, in order to eradicate from their minds the love of freedom and independence. His

ſyſtem of policy, of which many parts are atrocious outrages on the rights of Nature, eſtabliſhed the firmeſt and the moſt extenſive deſpotiſm that was ever eſtabliſhed in the Eaſt, and has, on theſe reaſons, prevailed more or leſs in the Perſian dynaſty, and in all the governments which have been built on its ruins; yet Xenophon and Cicero, who were both republicans and philoſophers, extol Cyrus to the ſkies. But had theſe men underſtood rectitude on the principles of truth, they muſt have perceived, that power never can be juſtly obtained but by conqueſt over thoſe by whom we are firſt unlawfully attacked, or by ſuch a fair influence over the mind as ſhall convince men that they will be ſafe and happy under our authority.

Cyrus is one of thoſe plauſible knaves who have been ſet up as models for example; and, on theſe reaſons, he impoſes on all thoſe who do not reflect deeply. But I am convinced, that a Cæſar Borgia, or a Cataline, had their characters been united with a brilliant ſucceſs, would have equally impoſed on the vulgar; for as Helvetius very juſtly obſerves, it is only the weakneſs of the poor rogue which men deſpiſe, not his diſhoneſty.

In order to take from public ſentiment a reproach which leaves a deep ſtain on the human character, and to correct many irregularities, and even enormities, which ariſe from incorrect

ſyſtems of ethics, it ought to be the firſt care of education to teach virtue on immutable principles, and to avoid that confuſion which muſt ariſe from confounding the laws and cuſtoms of ſociety with thoſe obligations which are founded on correct principles of equity. But as you have had patience to go through my whole plan of education, from infancy to manhood, it is but fair that I ſhould attend to your objections, and examine whether my plan is founded on error, or on the principles of reaſon and truth. Know then, good Hortenſia, that I have given ſimilar rules for male and female enducation, on the following grounds of reaſoning.

Firſt, That there is but one rule of right for the conduct of all rational beings; conſequently that true virtue in one ſex muſt be equally ſo in the other, whenever a proper opportunity calls for its exertion; and, *vice verſa*, what is vice in one ſex, cannot have a different property when found in the other.

Secondly, That true wiſdom, which is never found at variance with rectitude, is as uſeful to women as to men; becauſe it is neceſſary to the higheſt degree of happineſs, which can never exiſt with ignorance.

Laſtly, That as on our firſt entrance into another world, our ſtate of happineſs may poſſibly depend on the degree of perfection we have attained

tained in this, we cannot juſtly leſſen, in one ſex or the other, the means by which perfection, that is another word for wiſdom, is acquired.

It would be paying you a bad compliment, Hortenſia, were I to anſwer all the frivolous objections which prejudice has framed againſt the giving a learned education to women; for I know of no learning, worth having, that does not tend to free the mind from error, and enlarge our ſtock of uſeful knowledge. Thus much it may be proper to obſerve, that thoſe hours which are ſpent in ſtudious retirement by learned women, will not in all probability intrude ſo much on the time for uſeful avocation, as the wild and ſpreading diſſipations of the preſent day; that levity and ignorance will always be found in oppoſition to what is uſeful and graceful in life; and that the contrary may be expected from a truly enlightened underſtanding. However, Hortenſia, to throw ſome illuſtration on what I have advanced on this ſubject, it may be neceſſary to ſhew you, that all thoſe vices and imperfections which have been generally regarded as inſeparable from the female character, do not in any manner proceed from ſexual cauſes, but are entirely the effects of ſituation and education. But theſe obſervations muſt be left to farther diſcuſſion.

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LETTER XXII.

No characteriſtic Difference in Sex.

THE great difference that is obſervable in the characters of the ſexes, Hortenſia, as they diſplay themſelves in the ſcenes of ſocial life, has given riſe to much falſe ſpeculation on the natural qualities of the female mind.—For though the doctrine of innate ideas, and innate affections, are in a great meaſure exploded by the learned, yet few perſons reaſon ſo cloſely and ſo accurately on abſtract ſubjects as, through a long chain of deductions, to bring forth a concluſion which in no reſpect militates with their premiſes.

It is a long time before the crowd give up opinions they have been taught to look upon with reſpect; and I know many perſons who will follow you willingly through the courſe of your argument, till they perceive it tends to the overthrow of ſome fond prejudice; and then they will either ſound a retreat, or begin a conteſt in which the contender for truth, though he cannot be overcome, is effectually ſilenced, from the mere wearineſs of anſwering poſitive aſſertions, reiterated without end. It is from ſuch cauſes that the no-

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tion of a ſexual difference in the human character has, with a very few exceptions, univerſally prevailed from the earlieſt times, and the pride of one ſex, and the ignorance and vanity of the other, have helped to ſupport an opinion which a cloſe obſervation of Nature, and a more accurate way of reaſoning, would diſprove.

It muſt be confeſſed, that the virtues of the males among the human ſpecies, though mixed and blended with a variety of vices and errors, have diſplayed a bolder and a more conſiſtent picture of excellence than female nature has hitherto done. It is on theſe reaſons that, when we compliment the appearance of a more than ordinary energy in the female mind, we call it maſculine; and hence it is, that Pope has elegantly ſaid *a perfect woman's but a ſofter man.* And if we take in the conſideration, that there can be but one rule of moral excellence for beings made of the ſame materials, organized after the ſame manner, and ſubjected to ſimilar laws of Nature, we muſt either agree with Mr. Pope, or we muſt reverſe the propoſition, and ſay, that *a perfect man is a woman formed after a coarſer mold.* The difference that actually does ſubſiſt between the ſexes, is too flattering for men to be willingly imputed to accident; for what accident occaſions, wiſdom might correct; and it is better, ſays Pride, to give up the advantages we might derive from the perfection

ſection of our fellow aſſociates, than to own that Nature has been juſt in the equal diſtribution of her favours. Theſe are the ſentiments of the men; but mark how readily they are yielded to by the women; not from humility I aſſure you, but merely to preſerve with character thoſe fond vanities on which they ſet their hearts. No; ſuffer them to idolize their perſons, to throw away their life in the purſuit of triſles, and to indulge in the gratification of the meaner paſſions, and they will heartily join in the ſentence of their degradation.

Among the moſt ſtrenuous aſſerters of a ſexual difference in character, Rouſſeau is the moſt conſpicuous, both on account of that warmth of ſentiment which diſtinguiſhes all his writings, and the eloquence of his compoſitions: but never did enthuſiaſm and the love of paradox, thoſe enemies to philoſophical diſquiſition, appear in more ſtrong oppoſition to plain ſenſe than in Rouſſeau's definition of this difference. He ſets out with a ſuppoſition, that Nature intended the ſubjection of the one ſex to the other; that conſequently there muſt be an inferiority of intellect in the ſubjected party; but as man is a very imperfect being, and apt to play the capricious tyrant, Nature, to bring things nearer to an equality, beſtowed on the woman ſuch attractive graces, and ſuch an inſinuating addreſs, as to turn the balance on the other ſcale. Thus Nature, in a giddy

giddy mood, recedes from her purpoſes, and ſubjects prerogative to an influence which muſt produce confuſion and diſorder in the ſyſtem of human affairs. Rouſſeau ſaw this objection; and in order to obviate it, he has made up a moral perſon of the union of the two ſexes, which, for contradiction and abſurdity, outdoes every metaphyſical riddle that was ever formed in the ſchools. In ſhort, it is not reaſon, it is not wit; it is pride and ſenſuality that ſpeak in Rouſſeau, and, in this inſtance, has lowered the man of genius to the licentious pedant.

But whatever might be the wiſe purpoſe intended by Providence in ſuch a diſpoſition of things, certain it is, that ſome degree of inferiority, in point of corporal ſtrength, ſeems always to have exiſted between the two ſexes; and this advantage, in the barbarous ages of mankind, was abuſed to ſuch a degree, as to deſtroy all the natural rights of the female ſpecies, and reduce them to a ſtate of abject ſlavery. What accidents have contributed in Europe to better their condition, would not be to my purpoſe to relate; for I do not intend to give you a hiſtory of women; I mean only to trace the ſources of their peculiar foibles and vices; and theſe I firmly believe to originate in ſituation and education only: for ſo little did a wiſe and juſt Providence intend to make the condition of ſlavery an unalterable law of female nature, that

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in the ſame proportion as the male ſex have conſulted the intereſt of their own happineſs, they have relaxed in their tyranny over women; and ſuch is their uſe in the ſyſtem of mundane creation, and ſuch their natural influence over the male mind, that were theſe advantages properly exerted, they might carry every point of any importance to their honour and happineſs. However, till that period arrives in which women will act wiſely, we will amuſe ourſelves in talking of their follies.

The ſituation and education of women, Hortenſia, is preciſely that which muſt neceſſarily tend to corrupt and debilitate both the powers of mind and body. From a falſe notion of beauty and delicacy, their ſyſtem of nerves is depraved before they come out of their nurſery; and this kind of depravity has more influence over the mind, and conſequently over morals, than is commonly apprehended. But it would be well if ſuch cauſes only acted towards the debaſement of the ſex; their moral education is, if poſſible, more abſurd than their phyſical. The principles and nature of virtue, which is never properly explained to boys, is kept quite a myſtery to girls. They are told indeed, that they muſt abſtain from thoſe vices which are contrary to their perſonal happineſs, or they will be regarded as criminals, both by God and man; but all the higher parts

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of rectitude, every thing that ennobles our being, and that renders us both innoxious and uſeful, is either not taught, or is taught in ſuch a manner as to leave no proper impreſſion on the mind. This is ſo obvious a truth, that the defects of female education have ever been a fruitful topic of declamation for the moraliſt; but not one of this claſs of writers have laid down any judicious rules for amendment. Whilſt we ſtill retain the abſurd notion of a ſexual excellence, it will militate againſt the perfecting a plan of education for either ſex. The judicious Addiſon animadverts on the abſurdity of bringing a young lady up with no higher idea of the end of education than to make her agreeable to a huſband, and confining the neceſſary excellence for this happy acquiſition to the mere graces of perſon.

Every parent and tutor may not expreſs himſelf in the ſame manner as is marked out by Addiſon; yet certain it is, that the admiration of the other ſex is held out to women as the higheſt honour they can attain; and whilſt this is conſidered as their *ſummum bonum*, and the beauty of their perſons the chief *deſideratum* of men, Vanity, and its companion Envy, muſt taint, in their characters, every native and every acquired excellence. Nor can you, Hortenſia, deny, that theſe qualities, when united to ignorance, are fully equal to the engendering and rivetting all thoſe vices and foibles which

which are peculiar to the female ſex; vices and foibles which have cauſed them to be conſidered, in ancient times, as beneath cultivation, and in modern days have ſubjected them to the cenſure and ridicule of writers of all deſcriptions, from the deep thinking philoſopher to the man of ton and gallantry, who, by the bye, ſometimes diſtinguiſhes himſelf by qualities which are not greatly ſuperior to thoſe he deſpiſes in women. Nor can I better illuſtrate the truth of this obſervation than by the following picture, to be found in the polite and gallant Cheſterfield. "Women," ſays his Lordſhip, "are only children of a larger growth. They have an entertaining tattle, ſometimes wit; but for ſolid reaſoning, and good ſenſe, I never in my life knew one that had it, or who acted or reaſoned in conſequence of it for four and twenty hours together. A man of ſenſe only trifles with them, plays with them, humours and flatters them, as he does an engaging child; but he neither conſults them, nor truſts them in ſerious matters."

LETTER XXIII.

Coquettry.

THOUGH the ſituation of women in modern Europe, Hortenſia, when compared with that condition of abject ſlavery in which they have always been held in the eaſt, may be conſidered as brilliant; yet if we withhold compariſon, and take the matter in a poſitive ſenſe, we ſhall have no great reaſon to boaſt of our privileges, or of the candour and indulgence of the men towards us. For with a total and abſolute excluſion of every political right to the ſex in general, married women, whoſe ſituation demand a particular indulgence, have hardly a civil right to ſave them from the groſſeſt injuries; and though the gallantry of ſome of the European ſocieties have neceſſarily produced indulgence, yet in others the faults of women are treated with a ſeverity and rancour which militates againſt every principle of religion and common ſenſe. Faults, my friend, I hear you ſay; you take the matter in too general a ſenſe; you know there is but one fault which a woman of honour may not commit with impunity; let her only take care that ſhe is not caught in a love intrigue,

intrigue, and ſhe may lie, ſhe may deceive, ſhe may defame, ſhe may ruin her own family with gaming, and the peace of twenty others with her coquettry, and yet preſerve both her reputation and her peace. Theſe are glorious privileges indeed, Hortenſia; but whilſt plays and novels are the favourite ſtudy of the fair, whilſt the admiration of men continues to be ſet forth as the chief honour of woman, whilſt power is only acquired by perſonal charms, whilſt continual diſſipation baniſhes the hour of reflection, Nature and flattery will too often prevail; and when this is the caſe, ſelf preſervation will ſuggeſt to conſcious weakneſs thoſe methods which are the moſt likely to conceal the ruinous treſpaſs, however baſe and criminal they may be in their nature. The crimes that women have committed, both to conceal and to indulge their natural failings, ſhock the feelings of moral ſenſe; but indeed every love intrigue, though it does not terminate in ſuch horrid cataſtrophes, muſt naturally tend to debaſe the female mind, from its violence to educational impreſſions, from the ſecrecy with which it muſt be conducted, and the debaſing dependancy to which the intriguer, if ſhe is a woman of reputation, is ſubjected. Lying, flattery, hypocriſy, bribery, and a long catalogue of the meaneſt of the human vices, muſt all be employed to preſerve neceſſary appearances. Hence delicacy of ſentiment gradually decreaſes;

the warnings of virtue are no longer felt; the mind becomes corrupted, and lies open to every ſolicitation which appetite or paſſion preſents. This muſt be the natural courſe of things in every being formed after the human plan; but it gives riſe to the trite and fooliſh obſervation, that the firſt fault againſt chaſtity in woman has a radical power to deprave the character. But no ſuch frail beings come out of the hands of Nature. The human mind is built of nobler materials than to be ſo eaſily corrupted; and with all the diſadvantages of ſituation and education, women ſeldom become entirely abandoned till they are thrown into a ſtate of deſperation by the venomous rancour of their own ſex.

The ſuperiority of addreſs peculiar to the female ſex, ſays Rouſſeau, is a very equitable indemnification for their inferiority in point of ſtrength. Without this, woman would not be the companion of man, but his ſlave; it is by her ſuperior art and ingenuity that ſhe preſerves her equality, and governs him, whilſt ſhe affects to obey. Woman has every thing againſt her; as well our faults, as her own timidity and weakneſs. She has nothing in her favor but her ſubtlety and her beauty; is it not very reaſonable therefore that ſhe ſhould cultivate both?

I am perſuaded that Rouſſeau's underſtanding was too good to have led him into this error, had

he not been blinded by his pride and his ſenſuality. The firſt was ſoothed by the opinion of ſuperiority, lulled into acquieſcence by cajolement; and the ſecond was attracted by the idea of women playing off all the arts of coquettry to raiſe the paſſions of the ſex. Indeed the author fully avows his ſentiments, by acknowledging that he would have a young French woman cultivate her agreeable talents, in order to pleaſe her future huſband, with as much care and aſſiduity as a young Circaſſian cultivates her's to fit her for the harem of an eaſtern baſhaw.

Theſe agreeable talents, as the author expreſſes it, are played off to great advantage by women in all the courts of Europe; who, for the arts of female allurement, do not give place to the Circaſſian. But it is the practice of theſe very arts, directed to enthral the men, which act in a peculiar manner to corrupting the female mind. Envy, malice, jealouſy, a cruel delight in inſpiring ſentiments which at firſt perhaps were never intended to be reciprocal, are leading features in the character of the coquet, whoſe aim is to ſubject the whole world to her own humour; but in this vain attempt ſhe commonly ſacrifices both her decency and her virtue.

By the intrigues of women, and their rage for perſonal power and importance, the whole world has been filled with violence and injury; and their

levity and influence have proved ſo hoſtile to the exiſtence or permanence of rational manners, that it fully juſtifies the keeneſs of Mr. Pope's ſatire on the ſex.

But I hear my Hortenſia ſay, whither will this fit of moral anger carry you? I expected an apology, inſtead of a libel, on women; according to your deſcription of the ſex, the philoſopher has more reaſon to regret the indulgence, than what you have ſometimes termed the injuſtice of the men; and to look with greater complacency on the ſurly manners of the ancient Greeks, and the ſelfiſhneſs of Aſiatic luxury, than on the gallantry of modern Europe.

Though you have often heard me expreſs myſelf with warmth in the vindication of female nature, Hortenſia, yet I never was an apologiſt for the conduct of women. But I cannot think the ſurlineſs of the Greek manners, or the ſelfiſhneſs of Aſiatic luxury, a proper remedy to apply to the evil. If we could inſpect narrowly into the domeſtic concerns of ancient and modern Aſia, I dare ſay we ſhould perceive that the firſt ſprings of the vaſt machine of ſociety were ſet a going by women; and as to the Greeks, though it might be ſuppoſed that the peculiarity of their manners would have rendered them indifferent to the ſex, yet they were avowedly governed by them. They only transferred that confidence which they ought

to have given their wives, to their courtezans, in the ſame manner as our Engliſh huſbands do their tenderneſs and their complaiſance. They will ſacrifice a wife of fortune and family to reſentment, or the love of change, provided ſhe give them opportunity, and bear with much Chriſtian patience to be ſupplanted by their footman in the perſon of their miſtreſs.

No; as Rouſſeau obſerves, it was ordained by Providence that women ſhould govern ſome way or another; and all that reformation can do, is to take power out of the hands of vice and folly, and place it where it will not be liable to be abuſed.

To do the ſex juſtice, it muſt be confeſſed that hiſtory does not ſet forth more inſtances of poſitive power abuſed by women, than by men; and when the ſex have been taught wiſdom by education, they will be glad to give up indirect influence for rational privileges; and the precarious ſovereignty of an hour enjoyed with the meaneſt and moſt infamous of the ſpecies, for thoſe eſtabliſhed rights which, independent of accidental circumſtances, may afford protection to the whole ſex.

LETTER XXIV.

Flattery—Chaſtity—Male Rakes.

AFTER all that has been advanced, Hortenſia, the happineſs and perfection of the two ſexes are ſo reciprocally dependant on one another that, till both are reformed, there is no expecting excellence in either. The candid Addiſon has confeſſed, that in order to embelliſh the miſtreſs, you muſt give a new education to the lover, and teach the men not to be any longer dazzled by falſe charms and unreal beauty. Till this is the caſe, we muſt endeavour to palliate the evil we cannot remedy; and, in the education of our females, raiſe as many barriers to the corruptions of the world, as our underſtanding and ſenſe of things will permit.

As I give no credit to the opinion of a ſexual excellence, I have made no variation in the fundamental principles of the education of the two ſexes; but it will be neceſſary to admit of ſuch a difference in the plan as ſhall in ſome degree form the female mind to the particularity of its ſituation.

The fruits of true philoſophy are modeſty and humility

humility; for as we advance in knowledge, our deficiencies become more conſpicuous; and by learning to ſet a juſt eſtimate on what we poſſeſs, we find little gratification for the paſſion of pride. This is ſo juſt an obſervation, that we may venture to pronounce, without any exception to the rule, that a vain or proud man is, in a poſitive ſenſe, an ignorant man. However if it ſhould be our lot to have one of the fair ſex, diſtinguiſhed for any eminent degree of perſonal charms, committed to our care, we muſt not attempt by a premature cultivation to gather the fruits of philoſophy before their ſeaſon, nor expect to find the qualities of true modeſty and humility make their appearance till the blaze of beauty has in ſome meaſure been ſubdued by time. For ſhould we exhauſt all the powers of oratory, and all the ſtrength of ſound argument, in the endeavour to convince our pupil that beauty is of ſmall weight in the ſcale of real excellence, the enflamed praiſes ſhe will continually hear beſtowed on this quality will fix her in the opinion, that we *mean* to keep her in ignorance of her true worth. She will think herſelf deceived, and ſhe will reſent the injury by giving little credit to our precepts, and placing her confidence in thoſe who tickle her ears with laviſh panegyric on the captivating graces of her perſon.

Thus vanity ſteals on the mind, and thus a daughter,

daughter, kept under by the ill exerted power of parental authority, gives a full ear to the flattery of a coxcomb. Happy would it be for the ſex did the miſchief end here; but the ſoothings of flattery never fail to operate on the affections of the heart; and when love creeps into the boſom, the empire of reaſon is at an end. To prevent our fair pupils therefore from becoming the prey of coxcombs, and ſerving either to ſwell their triumph, or repair their ruined fortunes, it will be neceſſary to give them a full idea of the magnitude of their beauty, and the power this quality has over the frail mind of man. Nor have we in this caſe ſo much to fear from the intimations of a judicious friend, as from the inſiduous adulation of a deſigning admirer. The haughty beauty is too proud to regard the admiration of fops and triflers; ſhe will never condeſcend to the baſe, the treacherous, the dangerous arts of coquettry; and by keeping her heart free from the ſnares of love, ſhe will have time to cultivate that philoſophy which, if well underſtood, is a never failing remedy to human pride.

But the moſt difficult part of female education, is to give girls ſuch an idea of chaſtity, as ſhall arm their reaſon and their ſentiments on the ſide of this uſeful virtue. For I believe there are more women of underſtanding led into acts of imprudence by the ignorance, the prejudices, and the falſe

falſe craft of thoſe by whom they are educated, than from any other cauſe founded either in nature or in chance. You may train up a docile idiot to any mode of thinking or acting, as may beſt ſuit the intended purpoſe; but a reaſoning being will ſcan over your propoſitions, and if they find them grounded in falſehood, they will reject them with diſdain. When you tell a girl of ſpirit and reflection that chaſtity is a ſexual virtue, and the want of it a ſexual vice, ſhe will be apt to examine into the principles of religion, morals, and the reaſon of things, in order to ſatisfy herſelf on the truth of your propoſition. And when, after the ſtricteſt enquiries, ſhe finds nothing that will warrant the confining the propoſition to a particular ſenſe, ſhe will entertain doubts either of your wiſdom or your ſincerity; and regarding you either as a deceiver or a fool, ſhe will transfer her confidence to the companion of the eaſy vacant hour, whoſe compliance with her opinions can flatter her vanity. Thus left to Nature, with an unfortunate biaſs on her mind, ſhe will fall a victim to the firſt plauſible being who has formed a deſign on her perſon. Rouſſeau is ſo ſenſible of this truth, that he quarrels with human reaſon, and would put her out of the queſtion in all conſiderations of duty. But this is being as great a fanatic in morals, as ſome are in religion; and I ſhould much doubt the reality of that duty which would

would not ſtand the teſt of fair enquiry; beſide, as I intend to breed my pupils up to act a rational part in the world, and not to fill up a niche in the ſeraglio of a ſultan, I ſhall certainly give them leave to uſe their reaſon in all matters which concern their duty and happineſs, and ſhall ſpare no pains in the cultivation of this only ſure guide to virtue. I ſhall inform them of the great utility of chaſtity and continence; that the one preſerves the body in health and vigor, and the other, the purity and independence of the mind, without which it is impoſſible to poſſeſs virtue or happineſs. I ſhall intimate, that the great difference now beheld in the external conſequences which follow the deviations from chaſtity in the two ſexes, did in all probability ariſe from women having been conſidered as the mere property of the men; and, on this account had no right to diſpoſe of their own perſons: that policy adopted this difference, when the plea of property had been given up; and it was ſtill preſerved in ſociety from the unruly licentiouſneſs of the men, who, finding no obſtacles in the delicacy of the other ſex, continue to ſet at defiance both divine and moral law, and by mutual ſupport and general opinion to uſe their natural freedom with impunity. I ſhall obſerve, that this ſtate of things renders the ſituation of females, in their individual capacity very precarious; for the ſtrength which

Nature

Nature has given to the paſſion of love, in order to ſerve her purpoſes, has made it the moſt ungovernal propenſity of any which attends us. The ſnares therefore, that are continually laid for women, by perſons who run no riſk in compaſſing their ſeduction, expoſes them to continual danger; whilſt the implacability of their own ſex, who fear to give up any advantages which a ſuperior prudence, or even its appearances, give them, renders one falſe ſtep an irretrievable misfortune. That, for theſe reaſons, coquettry in women is as dangerous as it is diſhonorable. That a coquet commonly finds her own perdition, in the very flames which ſhe raiſes to conſume others; and that if any thing can excuſe the baſeneſs of female ſeduction, it is the baits which are flung out by women to entangle the affections, and excite the paſſions of men.

I know not what you may think of my method, Hortenſia, which I muſt acknowledge to carry the ſtamp of ſingularity; but for my part, I am ſanguine enough to expect to turn out of my hands a careleſs, modeſt beauty, grave, manly, noble, full of ſtrength and majeſty; and carrying about her an ægis ſufficiently powerful to defend her againſt the ſharpeſt arrow that ever was ſhot from Cupid's bow. A woman, whoſe virtue will not be of the kind to wrankle into an inveterate malignity againſt her own ſex for faults

faults which ſhe even encourages in the men, but who, underſtanding the principles of true religion and morality, will regard chaſtity and truth as indiſpenſible qualities in virtuous characters of either ſex; whoſe juſtice will incline her to extend her benevolence to the frailties of the fair as circumſtances invite, and to manifeſt her reſentment againſt the underminers of female happineſs; in ſhort, a woman who will not take a male rake either for a huſband or a friend. And let me tell you, Hortenſia, if women had as much regard for the virtue of chaſtity as in ſome caſes they pretend to have, a reformation would long ſince have taken place in the world; but whilſt they continue to cheriſh immodeſty in the men, their bitter perſecution of their own ſex will not ſave them from the imputation of thoſe concealed propenſities with which they are accuſed by Pope, and other ſevere ſatiriſts on the ſex.

LETTER

LETTER XXV.

Hints towards the Education of a Prince.

IN all monarchies, Hortenſia, the national proſperity, and the domeſtic felicity of a people, ſo entirely depend on the wiſdom and goodneſs of the reigning prince, that it is a matter of ſome aſtoniſhment to a reflecting mind, how men ſhould be firſt cajoled into placing ſuch a truſt in the infirm creature, man; and then ſhould be ſo neglectful of their proper intereſt and ſafety, as to leave the education of the individual they have inveſted with ſovereignty, to mere chance, or what is worſe, to the care of weak or deſigning perſons. For the hiſtories of all nations demonſtrate, that one feeble and wicked reign is often ſufficient to mar the wiſdom of ages.

I ſhall not trouble you with a dry and tedious diſcuſſion on modes of goverment; but it is certain, that all which can be alleged in favor of the monarchical form muſt, from the nature of things, depend on the perſonal virtues of the prince.

You will perhaps ſay, that no labour or coſt is ſpared in the education of princes; that they are put

put under the tuition of the moſt elevated men in the nation; that the arts and ſciences court their attention; and that they have the advantage of ſelecting their ſervants out of the moſt reſpectable ranks in ſociety.

If princes were placed under the tuition of men of the firſt worth and knowledge in the kingdom, Hortenſia, inſtead of thoſe of the moſt elevated rank, your obſervation might carry the appearance of weight: but it would be an appearance only; for what great effects can even a wiſe man produce by the moſt aſſiduous attention to the education of a being, ſurrounded from the inſtant of his birth by fawning courtiers? A being, ſet up as a pageant for the idolatry of the public. A being, treated with ceremonies which from their nature muſt deſtroy every juſt idea of ſelf, and of the relation in which he ſtands to the people whom he is to govern. A being, whoſe natural activity muſt be deſtroyed by the facility with which his every wiſh is indulged, and who becomes ſatiated even with variety, before other children are ſuffered to extend their purſuits beyond the moſt ſimple objects of enjoyment. And, to ſum up all, a being, whoſe mind muſt be corrupted by the deſigning ſycophants who crowd about him before his reaſon is ſufficiently ſtrong to perceive the difference between vice and virtue.

If a ſociety would reap any advantage from the perſonal

perſonal virtues of their prince, they muſt educate him far from the precincts of a court They muſt keep him a ſtranger to its vices, its ſervility, and its pageantry, till his underſtanding is ſufficiently informed to deſpiſe its ſnares. They muſt ſelect for his tutor a man of the firſt virtue, and of the moſt extenſive learning; a man, who to the juſteſt ideas of the rights of his ſpecies, unites a thorough knowledge of the domeſtic and foreign intereſts of the kingdom, its internal ſituation in regard to the ſtate of the poor, the diſtribution of property, and other matters of intelligence, neceſſary to a juſt equality in the levying taxes, and in the encouragements to be given to national induſtry. He muſt underſtand morals on their true principles, not on mutable grounds, which bend to the temporary convenience of the moment, which adopt a partial for a general utility, which introduce a diſtinction between a ſtate morality, and thoſe obligations, which are allowed in private concerns to bind the ſpecies, and which confound in the vulgar, the plain ideas of right and wrong. He muſt be an adept in the knowledge of the human mind; he muſt be well verſed in all the higher parts of philoſophy; and his elevation of ſentiment muſt be ſuch as to direct his ambition to the ſole object of beſtowing on his country the bleſſing of a patriot king. When ſuch a man is found, it will be of no conſequence whether he

is a nobleman or a commoner; whether he is rich or poor; his nobility of character will outweigh the nobility of birth; and it is always in the power of the public to grant him a pecuniary reward, which may bear ſome proportion to his eminent ſervices.

A tutor thus judiciouſly ſelected from the body of the ſociety, to the charge of this the moſt important office in the kingdom, ought to be truſted with the nomination of all the prince's domeſtics. If he does his duty, he will take care that the meaneſt of them be perſons of worth, and good conduct; and that as they riſe to importance by employments, which bring them nearer to the prince's perſon, and oftener in his preſence, they be proportionably elevated in their talents, their underſtanding, their knowledge, and their philoſophic virtues.

As courts, and every thing that carries the appearance of a court, ſhould be avoided in the education of a prince; it ought to be a ſtanding law of the realm, that no perſon go near the manſion in which the prince reſides, without the eſpecial leave of the council. Some few of the ſons of the nobility and gentry, whoſe education has been particularly attended to, may be ſelected for his play fellows. For I would not have you think, that I intend to call a cloiſtered monk to the throne; on the contrary, my opinion is that

the prince, when he arrives at a proper age for uſeful reflection, ought to be introduced into all the various ſcenes of innocent life. But let care be taken, that the royal character be flung off; and ſhould the *incognito* chance to be known, that every diſcouragement be given to an acknowledgment of the diſcovery. I am perſuaded, that the want of ſympathy with which princes are ſo often, and ſo juſtly reproached, proceeds as much from their never having beheld ſituations of diſtreſs, as from pride and arrogance of temper. Let my philoſophic prince then, whoſe temper muſt have been rendered gentle and humane by a refined education, be often carried into thoſe ſcenes of want and miſery adapted to move even the obdurate heart to pity. Let him mingle his tears with thoſe of the wretched, and let him enjoy the luxury of ſympathy.

A prince, my friend, thus rendered benevolent by precepts, by practice, and by all thoſe habits and cuſtoms which ſoften and excite ſentiment, will never ſhut his ears to the juſt complaints of his people. He will on the contrary, regard them with all the tenderneſs of paternal fondneſs; he will regulate his government in ſuch a manner as ſhall ſpread as much univerſal happineſs among his people, as the nature of things will admit; he will encourage a ſpirit of benevolence among the opulent part of his ſubjects; he will diſcourage

that oppreſſion which diſfigures the face of a country with objects in the oppoſite extremes of the lordly palace, and the almoſt untenable hovel. He will not regard himſelf as ſeated on the throne of ſovereignty for the gratification of ſelf importance and indulgence, but will generouſly ſacrifice even the repoſe of his life to the conſiderations of his duty.

To know the intereſts of humanity, ſays Marmontel, is the true ſtudy of a prince. Whatever is juſt, whatever is uſeful, that is truth; and the truth, a king ſhould inveſtigate. This is the fit employment of a prince; to this he ſhould dedicate his days; to know himſelf, and the nature of man, to develope the ſecret movements of the heart, the operations of habit, the ſpecific qualities of character, the influence of opinion, the powers and the weakneſſes of our frame; to ſtudy intenſely the temper, the manners, and the reſources of his people, together with the conduct of miniſters; and in this noble enquiry to let in light to the judgment on every ſide, with a generous encouragement to thoſe who have the ſpirit to call aloud for the redreſs of grievances committed in the prince's name.

This you will ſay, Hortenſia, is requiring a great deal of princes, and is as far above what is ſet forth in real life, as the characters to be found in

the regions of romance. But hiſtory has furniſhed us with a few ſuch ſublime characters; and if all the frivolous ceremonies of a court, and its idle debauchery, were to give place to a cloſe attention to the ſtudy of hiſtory, to ſyſtems of policy, to the various modes of government which have been carried into execution, or which have been projected by theoriſts, to all thoſe works which treat on the rights of Nature, the ſocial compact made or implied, and more eſpecially the conſtitution of that ſtate over which the royal pupil is deſtined to reign, it would enable him to form adequate ideas of the kingly office, and the importance of its duties. He would perceive the neceſſity of making the laws the ſole rule of his conduct; he would perceive, that no ſovereign can reign in freedom, who is under the neceſſity of intriguing with parties; and that a prince, who cloſely unites himſelf to his people by mutual intereſt and mutual ſupport, will have nothing to fear from the oppoſition of deſigning men.

But methinks, I hear ſome of the critics ſay, that all theſe good diſpoſitions of mind, theſe wiſe determinations of a cool temper and a reflecting head, will diſappear, and be no more, when the royal philoſopher is brought from his retirement into the vortex of diſſipation, and his virtue expoſed to thoſe temptations which irritate the paſſions, and ſtimulate to intemperance. It muſt

be confeſſed, Hortenſia, that the inſtances are ſo rare where wiſdom has been found ſeated on the throne, that it may be regarded as a phenomenon of the moſt wonderful kind: but whilſt hiſtory can boaſt of her Trajans, her Antoninus's, and her Julians, they will ſerve as examples to prove, that precept, habit, and early impreſſions of the favourable kind, will do much to reſiſt the tide of corrupting principles with which courts abound. And as theſe great examples are all to be found in men who have been raiſed from a private ſtation to a throne, or who have been educated far from a court, it manifeſts the propriety of detaching the perſon of the prince from the ſeat of royalty.

Unfortunately for the reputation of women, or more candidly ſpeaking, for the honour of *la belle paſſione*, theſe very extraordinary princes have been very little ſuſceptible of its impreſſion. The turbulent movements of love, and its enthralling power, is little adapted to the exertion of thoſe active and paſſive virtues which are required in the conduct of a great Prince. Indeed every ſpecies of favoritiſm is hoſtile to the patriotiſm of a king, who is no ſooner known to be under the influence of perſonal affection, than the ambition of all who ſurround him is fired with the view of gaining the aſcendency over that affection. Adulation and treachery beſiege the throne, and partiality con-

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fers the recompence due to virtue upon elegant and poliſhed vice.

Thus ſpeaks Marmontel in his Beliſarius; and his ſentiments on the duties of the kingly character are very correct; but he gives the preference in this work to deſpotic forms of government, on the idea, that there is a more intimate union of intereſt between a prince and his people, than between the people and the individuals who form the component parts of popular governments. Marmontel's idea in the abſtract may be right, but it will never do in practice till mankind have ſufficient ſenſe to perceive their true intereſt, and a ſufficient command over their paſſions to act in conſequence of their perceptions. All therefore that can reſult from his fine ſpun reaſoning, is what has been allowed by the greateſt ſticklers for democracy; namely, that could we be ſure of a line of philoſophic princes, the people might receive benefit, rather than injury, from the plenitude of their power. But now I hear a hundred voices raiſed againſt me for being ſo unreaſonable as to wiſh to deprive princes of the joys of love and friendſhip, with many trite and fooliſh obſervations concerning the hardſhip of ſovereignty on any terms, but that of making the intereſts of mankind bend to perſonal convenience, and perſonal pleaſure. This is mere talking, without

once examining into ſelf, or the nature of human ambition, which is ſuch as to give an irreſiſtable charm to ſovereignty, on any terms. And if a vulgar feeling of ambition can annex the idea of ſuch advantages to power, what muſt be the ſentiments of a man inſpired by education with the divine enthuſiaſm of general benevolence, and who has been taught to entertain adequate ideas of the privilege annexed to the royal ſtation. The exalted privilege, that every act of virtue, every performance of duty, every inſtance of propriety in conduct, affect the public weal; of enjoying a power which extends even over the empire of folly and vice, and of being able to confer the moſt important obligations on ſucceſſive generations.

Theſe, Hortenſia, are the glorious recompence which attend the giving up ſome private enjoyments, common in their kind, and calculated to relieve the tedium and the ſorrows of private life, but not adapted to the artificial greatneſs of princes, who have ſo large a return of ſincere panegyric for a conduct that bears any proportion to the elevation of their ſtation, as to give them a ſtimulus in the article of reputation, which in the ſame extent can never attend men of inferior rank. How comes it then, that ſo few princes of all the long liſt who have reigned and tyrannized over

mankind, ſhould have been inclined to give up ſatisfactions neceſſarily limited by the laws of Nature within the bounds of enjoyment which lies open to all men, to advantages peculiarly annexed to their ſituation.

It thus happens, becauſe princes are corrupted by the allurements of pleaſure in the earlieſt period of manhood. If they were kept from all temptation till the underſtanding was informed, and the mind had acquired ſufficient ſtrength to obey its dictates, the incitements to virtue, which royalty ſets forth, would ſeldom fail of its effect. But as I mentioned enthuſiaſm, it will be neceſſary to obſerve, that the education of princes ſhould in ſome reſpect differ from the education of their ſubjects. For let their natural vivacity and ſuſceptibility be ever ſo great, you need not fear to drive them into a miſchievous enthuſiaſm, becauſe they have ſcope enough for the play of their virtues, without injuring their perſonal happineſs; only whilſt you endeavour to awaken their feelings to objects of public good, let not the virtue of frugality be forgotten; let it always be inculcated, that moderation is the moſt uſeful virtue in a prince; that regal dignity is not derived from the brilliant appearance which enlivens the palace; and that what is called the munificence of the ſovereign, is ſquandering the ſubſtance of the people entruſted

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to his care; the ſpoils of the poor and the indigent. In a word, that every ſhilling beſtowed by a monarch on individuals whoſe ſervices and talents have not been eminently uſeful to their country, is at the beſt a baſe abuſe of confidence, unleſs it is taken from ſums which might otherwiſe have been expended on perſonal gratifications.

LETTERS
ON
EDUCATION.

PART II.

LETTER I.

Influence of Domeſtic and National Education.

THE modes of domeſtic education, Hortenſia, as practiſed by the moderns, are not calculated to inſtil that wiſdom into youth which is neceſſary to guard againſt the dangers that ſurround it. In a total ignorance of the nature of thoſe things which conſtitute the happineſs and the miſery of the ſpecies, young perſons are commonly initiated into the circles of converſation and the diſſipated amuſements of the age, at that period of life when the affections of childhood are by repeated impreſſions ſtrengthened into paſſions, and when the paſſions of adults ſpring up in the mind.

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It is now, as Helvetius obſerves, that the youth finds himſelf attacked by a greater number of ſenſations; all that ſurrounds ſtrikes him, and ſtrikes him forcibly. The imagination eaſily faſcinated, both from its natural warmth, and the novelty of untried pleaſures ſtamp on the ductile mind thoſe various propenſities which form its character through life. At this important period of exiſtence, a public education, if it uniformly tends to inſtil the principles of equity and benevolence; if it uniformly tends to refine the mind and encreaſe its ſympathy, will undoubtedly correct the intemperance of the groſs and the malevolent affections. But though the education of the world will neceſſarily give a turn to the paſſions, yet it cannot teach the way to moderate and ſubdue them. It cannot teach us to be content with thoſe limitations within which God has thought proper to confine human happineſs; nor can it teach us to govern the imagination with ſuch judgment as ſhall convert it from a ſource of perpetual evil, into a fountain of inexhauſtible good.

It is indeed ſufficient for the bulk of the people, if they are civilized in ſuch a manner as to be innoxious in their conduct as citizens. That induſtry, which is neceſſary to their ſubſiſtence, will tame the turbulence of the imagination, and prevent it from being the ſource of miſchief to themſelves or others. But this is not the caſe with

with the higher claſs of citizens whoſe circumſtances and ſituation give them leiſure, and opportunity, to indulge all the caprices of fancy. That wiſdom which accompanies knowledge, is neceſſary to the great and opulent to prevent them from falling into thoſe follies which blaſt in their bud the faireſt fruits of fortune, and cloud the brighteſt proſpects of human felicity.

If the higher claſſes of the people have not wiſdom, who will be the framers of thoſe laws which enlighten the underſtandings of the citizens in the eſſentials of right and wrong? Where ſhall we find thoſe examples which are to direct the ſteps of the ignorant in the paths which lead to righteouſneſs? Where that public inſtruction, which teaches to the multitude the relative duties of life? And where thoſe decent and well regulated cuſtoms, which form the difference between civilized and uncivilized nations?

As the ſenſes, Hortenſia, are the only inlets to human knowledge, conſequently human knowledge can only be gained by experience and obſervation. Men as they gained ideas of good and evil, by experience, communicated their obſervations to their offspring. Domeſtic education therefore, muſt have began with the beginning of the life of man; and when the ſpecies formed themſelves into ſocieties, their ideas were

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neceſſarily extended from the variety of impreſſions and inſtructions which they received in ſuch aſſociations.

With the encreaſe of the ſtock of his ideas, man encreaſed his power of making compariſons, and conſequently enlarged his knowledge of the relation of things. Some modes of conduct generally adopted, ſome rules and exerciſes fitted to a ſtate of offence and defence, neceſſarily belong to all aſſociations. Education then, in a ſtate of the rudeſt ſociety, muſt neceſſarily be more complex and more methodical than education in the natural, or more ſolitary ſtate of man; who as he riſes from this rude ſtate of ſociety, through all the degrees which form the difference between the ſavage and the civilized nations, muſt receive impreſſions more numerous; his motives for action muſt grow more complex; his duties and his obligations muſt enlarge; the rules for his conduct muſt become more nice and various; his actions be more critically obſerved; his offences more certain-puniſhed; and conſequently his good or ill fate muſt depend in a more particular manner on his education, than when in a ſtate of nature, or in a ſtate of ſavage ſociety. But when the manners of ſociety refine, when ſtandards of taſte are eſtabliſhed, when arts are practiſed, when ſciences are ſtudied, and when laws are numerous; it is then that the education of citizens, and more eſpecially

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of the better ſort, becomes a matter of the higheſt importance and difficulty.

The firſt ſtages of the Roman republic preſent us with a ſet of military huſbandmen. The fine arts were not practiſed among them; the ſciences were not ſtudied; nor commerce purſued. In this ſtate of ſociety, mankind exhibit rather a diſguſting than a pleaſing picture. The ſimplicity of their manners partakes rather of a ſavage rudeneſs, than a rational moderation; for the privation of thoſe luxuries which equally tend to corrupt and improve the mind, allow them no means to acquire thoſe graces and virtues which render the ſpecies objects of our admiration and eſteem.

But the peculiar ſituation of the Romans, when they formed themſelves into a diſtinct community, a ſpirit of heroiſm in their leaders, the patriotiſm and wiſdom of ſeveral of their kings, gave a luſtre to theſe republicans which never was acquired by any people in the ſame ſtate of ſociety. The love of glory, and the love of country, were paſſions purſued by the firſt Romans, with an enthuſiaſm which tinctured every part of their conduct and deportment. They became a nation of heroes; animated with theſe exalted affections, their manners were both ſimple and dignified. No aſſembly of men ever diſplayed ſuch graceful virtues as the Roman ſenate, before the Romans were corrupted with power, and by the luxuries

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it procures. They ſtruck the ambaſſadors of Pyrrhus with awe and admiration. They ſuſpended for a time the fierce rage of the barbarous Gaul; and they are now held forth by the virtuous literati, as models of all that is ſublime in the human character.

At this period of the commonwealth, the public and domeſtic education of the Romans had only two objects in view. The one was, that of making illuſtrious citizens; and the other, of aggrandizing the ſociety at the expence of the private intereſt of its members. Animated with a warm zeal for the proſperity of the republic, they loſt ſight of thoſe advantages which men propoſe to themſelves when they unite in ſociety, viz. the acquiring and ſecuring by an union of force, every enjoyment which is not found at variance with the peace and ſecurity of others. In a wild delirium of exalted paſſion, the Romans little attended to the uſeful precepts of philoſophy; accordingly their virtues were often at enmity with their humanity, and their greatneſs with their rational happineſs. The fondeſt admirers of the ſtern Brutus, hardly envy him the glory of an obdurate juſtice, which with a ſteadineſs that appeared to border on inſenſibility, triumphed over the urgent calls of parental affection, and thus buried the characters of the man and the father, in that of the inflexible judge. We reſpect the

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filial piety of Manlius, much more than that immoveable ſpirit of diſcipline, which, deaf to the mild dictates of equity, put a ſudden period to the life of a hopeful and a virtuous ſon. And whilſt we admire the incorruptible integrity of a Fabricius, we can hardly determine whether the devotement of a Decius was an act of cool and reſolute reaſon, or an act of glorious inſanity.

LETTER II.

Athens.

AT the time when the Roman republic was yet in its infancy, Hortenſia, the Greek ſtates were advanced to their higheſt maturity. The arts and ſciences had been long tranſplanted from the eaſtern world to the Greek ſettlements in Europe. They fixed their principal ſeat at Athens; and in this nurſery of the muſes, they acquired a degree of perfection, which has diſtinguiſhed the Athenians before all the civilized nations, either of the ancient modern world.

In the democracy of Athens, it was not the capricious partiality of a powerful patron, or the proſtitution of parts to the intereſted purpoſes of the great, which could raiſe either the fortune or the fame of its citizens. The man who aſpired to the honours of the ſtate, muſt have diſtinguiſhed himſelf in the eyes of the people at large for the poſſeſſion of thoſe qualities and virtues which were held in general eſteem for their uſe and ornament. He muſt have acquired ſuch a knowledge

ledge in public affairs as ſhould enable him to direct the counſels of the republic in all thoſe critical ſituations to which the Greek ſtates were expoſed from their internal diviſions, and, from their vicinity, to the formidable power of the Perſian monarchy. He muſt have had wiſdom to govern, and military ſkill and courage ſufficient to defend his country in the moſt perilous dangers. He muſt not only have been in the poſſeſſion of theſe qualities, but he muſt have been enabled to have acquitted himſelf in the public debates in ſuch a manner as ſhould at once have captivated the ears of his countrymen, and have convinced them that his pretenſions were well grounded. In ſhort, he muſt have appeared to excel all his competitors, as a ſtateſman, a warrior, and an orator.

The difficulties which lay in the way of ambition at Athens, the manner in which the public debates were carried on, a perfect equality among the citizens, except that pre-eminence which uncommon talents procured to the poſſeſſor, could not fail of having a great influence on public and domeſtic education. It gave an uſeful efficacy to both; and though domeſtic education muſt have been among the Athenians very complex and difficult, yet it was at an early period of life, when her Miltiades, her Cymons, her Ariſtides, her Themiſtocles, her Pericles, her Alcibiades, her

Demoſthenes*, and her Phocions, diſtinguiſhed themſelves in the characters of ſtateſmen, ſoldiers, and orators.

The principal object of the Athenians, in the education of their offspring, was the beſtowing on them ſuch talents as were capable of dazzling the eyes of the multitude. And as the avenues to fame and power were ſhut to all thoſe who did not diſtinguiſh themſelves for their excellencies in the practice of the fine arts, or by ſervices rendered to their country, patriotiſm was affected by every pretender to popularity, and from the effect of habit, became a determined princple of action in all thoſe whoſe minds were favourable to the cultivation of the higher virtues.

The greateſt admirers of the fine arts, Hortenſia, muſt acknowlege, that in Greece, where they were cultivated with the moſt aſſiduous attention, they manifeſted an equal tendency to corrupt as to improve the mind. The religion of the Greeks was poetical, and evidently tended to inflame the paſſions, and vitiate the affections. The monſtrous tales of their Gods, ſanctified by example every vice to which humanity is inclined; and the maſterpieces of art, which were every day diſplayed to the admiring eye, raiſed in their be-

* We muſt confine the virtuous and brilliant qualities of Demoſthenes to an ardent love of his country, and to the moſt diſtinguiſhed powers of oratory, for he did not ſhine as a ſoldier.

holders an enthuſiaſtic paſſion for the beauty of form. Their wiſeſt men ſpeak of the excellency of perſonal beauty, in a manner which diſguſts the ſober ſentiments of a philoſophic mind; and though they have been copied even in their weakneſſes by all thoſe who affect an exact imitation of the ancients, yet the impartial and reflecting muſt be convinced, that the virtue of that people muſt be in great danger who are continually expoſed to the ſtimulating incentives of an inflamed imagination.

Patriotic heroiſm among the Athenians, as in other nations, degenerated into a corrupt attention to ſelfiſh gratification, when the ſimplicity of their manners gave place to a diſſipated luxury. The means which Pericles took to preſerve his popularity, ſhew, that this people were already depraved when this artful ſtateſman was advanced to the firſt command. But when the devotement of the public finances to the ſupport of the theatre was rigidly adhered to in the utmoſt exigencies of the republic, the Athenians touched at that period of national corruption which never fails to bring on the ruin of a ſtate. It was now that the animating eloquence of a Demoſthenes was heard with admiration, but without producing any permanent effect; it was now that the ſteady virtue of a Phocion ſerved to illuſtrate the individual without preſerving the ſtate: and it was now that

the Athenian valour, which had proved a bulwark to the freedom of Greece, was ſubdued by one of the petty ſtates of the confederacy, which had ſuddenly riſen from inſignificancy to power, by the indefatigable efforts and military ſkill of an ambitious monarch. It was in the very dregs of national depravity, when Socrates attempted to improve the religion and the morals of the Athenians, and endeavoured to convince them, that happineſs is the offspring of wiſdom, not of fortune; and that enjoyment lies in the moderation, not in the exceſs of indulgence.

At the period when Socrates delivered his philoſophical inſtructions to his countrymen, they had newly recovered a freedom which they were too much depraved not to abuſe. The philoſopher was cited before the people by the enemies of his virtues, and condemned to die on two capital charges. The one, for infidelity to the religion of the country; and the other, for attempting to corrupt the morals of the people.

Thoſe higher parts of philoſophy, which inſtruct men in all the relative duties of life, which teach them the uſe of the various paſſions and affections, the art of moderating and directing them to the purpoſes of a general and private good, were little known to the ancients previous to the days of Socrates: conſequently, the education of the Greeks, before this period, was very inadequate

adequate to the purpoſes of domeſtic virtue, or national happineſs. And even at the time when philoſophy was ſyſtematically taught at Athens by Plato, the diſciple of Socrates, and his ſucceſſor Ariſtotle, the Greeks do not appear to have been much acquainted with thoſe moral qualities which form the virtue and the glory of rational agents.

Alexander, the much boaſted diſciple of Ariſtotle, confined theſe ſo entirely to the ſucceſs of arms, that, in a rage for fame, he filled almoſt every corner of the known world with his violencies. Full of the intoxicating fumes of a vain glory, he envied his father the reputation he had acquired for that ſucceſs which laid the foundation of his own greatneſs. He put whole ſocieties of men to death for having the inſolence to defend themſelves againſt his arms. In his anger, he ſpared neither the faithfuleſt of his friends, nor the moſt intimate of his companions; and, in the uproar of a wild debauch, at the motion of an infamous proſtitute, he ſet on fire, with his own hands, and burnt to aſhes, the city of Perſepolis, which was without a parallel for its magnitude and beauty.

LETTER III.

Sparta.

THE Spartan republic, Hortenſia, differed widely in its form from the Athenian. It was governed by two perpetual magiſtrates, with the title of kings; but their power was confined within ſuch ſtrict limits, as to preſerve to the citizens every eſſential of freedom. The Athenians were at once warriors, huſbandmen, artiſts, and merchants; but no Spartan citizen was allowed to follow any other profeſſion, but that of arms. Devoted to the defence and aggrandizement of their country, the Spartans ſubmitted to a diurnal diſcipline, more rigid and ſevere than was exacted in the actual ſervice of the field. Nor were theſe the only particularities which diſtinguiſhed the Spartans from the reſt of mankind; their food was ſimple, they ate in common; they deſpiſed the flowers of oratory; their ſpeech was brief, but nervous; and they were denied the uſe both of gold and of ſilver.

The virtues of an heroic patriotiſm, a ſelf denying moderation, and unconquerable patience in enduring fatigue, has ſignalized the Spartans among

among all nations in the ancient and modern world. It preſerved to them for the ſpace of many years, the firſt rank among the Greek ſtates. It gave them the lead in all matters which reſpected the united intereſts of the confederacy. It preſerved Greece from the power of Xerxes, by a timely interruption to an army, which, from its numbers and the unprepared ſtate of the country, muſt otherwiſe have been invincible; and under the auſpices of Ageſilaus, it was on the point of affecting with a handful of Spartans the conqueſt of the Eaſt. Spartan heroiſm can never be forgotten whilſt the plains of Thermophyle have a real being, or exiſt in the memory of man.

On the union of forces to repel the common enemy, the Athenians exerted themſelves with ſuch energy, and ſuch ſucceſs, that they became the rivals of Sparta both in fame and power. This laid the foundation of that jealouſy and diſcord between the two ſtates, which was followed with an inteſtine war among the whole confederacy; and this, with ſuch perpetual diviſions in the common intereſts, as at length terminated in the ruin and ſubjection of all Greece. Helvetius very juſtly obſerves, that the fatal jealouſy that ſubſiſted between the republics of Sparta and Athens, would have produced nothing more than a noble emulation, if the two ſtates had been governed by the ſame laws; if the limits of their territories

ritories had been fixed by immutable bounds; or if they had been able to extend them without arming all the other republics againſt them; and laſtly, if they had known no other riches than the iron money of Lycurgus.

Perſia beheld with pleaſure thoſe internal feuds which weakened a power that had proved too ſtrong for her innumerable hoſts; and which threatened a ſevere retaliation for the injuries and inſults it had received in the invaſion of Xerxes. Her policy directed her to tender her ſervices to both the rivals, and to preſerve the balance of ſtrength in ſuch a manner as ſhould protract the war. The advantages gained by Athens from her ſuperior opulence, made Sparta feel forcibly the want of money. Perſia offered, and they accepted, the fatal preſent. From this period the laws and manners of the Spartans gradually changed. the wiſe inſtitutions of Lycurgus were neglected; and Sparta, no longer invincible from its courage and its diſcipline, ſhared the common fate of Greece in its ſubjection to the Roman power.

Unfortunately for the virtue of mankind, the ſelf denying dictates of equity and juſtice, with that moderation in regard to a ſelf intereſt which the principles of a general benevolence inſpire, have been little conſidered in the laws and manners of any human ſociety.

The Spartans, who, in one favourable point of

view, appear with a luſtre ſuperior to all other nations, will not bear the nice inſpection of a critic in morals. Their little regard for money, made them very looſe in their principles on the ſubject of property. And though the dignity of their minds led them to regard the bleſſings of freedom as the moſt valuable gift of humanity; yet they treated their unfortunate ſlaves with an equal degree of cruelty, to that which the negro race at preſent experiences in the European ſettlements in the Weſt-Indies. Theſe imperfections in Spartan conduct, ſhew, that though the inſtitutions of Lycurgus were well adapted to the ſupport of patriotic and military virtue; yet, as they did not enforce on the citizens the benevolent duties of life, they were not the moſt perfect poſſible ſyſtems of public and private education.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

Rome.

WHILST the valour of the Romans was employed in the defence of their country, Hortenſia, and in the ſubjugating thoſe Italian ſtates which from motives of envy and jealouſy had haraſſed them with continual acts of hoſtility, they were as much diſtinguiſhed for the uprightneſs and wiſdom of their counſels, as they were for the ſobriety and dignity of their manners. In their quarrels with the neighbouring powers they were ſeldom guilty of the firſt offence; and their conqueſts were never followed with the deſtruction or the ſlavery of their enemies. On the contrary, they enlarged their powers and conſequence by granting the rights of Roman citizens to every ſtate who had not diſtinguiſhed itſelf by its enmity to their intereſts.

By this liberal plan of policy, by a candid attention to the intereſts of her allies, and by a ſtrict adherence to the articles of her treaties, Rome, for the ſpace of five hundred years, preſerved an unrivalled reputation in the weſtern world. And whilſt ſhe gradually advanced to a power which

which was one day to ſubdue the liberties of mankind, her friendſhip and her patronage were earneſtly ſolicited both as an arbitrator to ſettle differences, and as an effectual ſuccourer of the weak and the oppreſſed.

The Carthagenian republic, which had long flouriſhed as a powerful maritime and commercial ſtate, beheld with a jealous eye the growing vigor of the Roman commonwealth. Three ſeveral wars were waged between the rival ſtates, in which great courage was diſplayed on both ſides, but terminated in the total deſtruction of Carthage. This placed the Romans in a ſituation of becoming maſters of the world; and ſeduced them from that moderation and humanity for which they had been hitherto ſignalized.

The reduction and ſubjection of the Greek ſtates completed the corruption and depravity of Roman manners. Before this period, the love of glory was the only ambition which had animated a Roman ſoul; for the Romans were happily without that ſtimulus to a covetous appetite which a taſte for the arts too often produces. Nor did the poſſeſſion of riches reflect any luſtre on the owner. When poverty was found in thoſe families who had ſerved the firſt offices of the ſtate, it conveyed to the public the idea of an incorruptible integrity, and it found every mark of reſpect which a grateful people can beſtow.

" What

"What uſe can I make of your preſents," ſays Fabricius to Pyrrhus, when this Prince attempted to corrupt his integrity, "my poverty does not prevent me from meeting at Rome with every mark of the moſt flattering attention." It is told among the anecdotes which relate to the contempt of the Romans for the beauties of art, that in the plunder of a Greek town, a ſoldier laid hold of a painting of one of the firſt maſters, and converted it into a cheſs board. This profanation was made the ſubject of a ſerious complaint by the inhabitants. "Do not trouble yourſelves," ſays the conſul, with a ſimplicity which ſtruck the plaintiffs with aſtoniſhment, "if the ſoldier has ſpoilt your picture, we will get another painted for you."

It was not long after the reduction of Greece, that the Romans continued in their inſenſibility for the captivating charms of art. The diſplay of the Grecian ſpoils in the triumph of Paulus Emilius, made a new and a ſtriking impreſſion on their minds; and the intercourſe which now took place between the conquerors and the conquered, opened new ſources of deſire, and new views of good to the Romans. They had Greek maſters, and Greek tutors. They ſtudied the ſciences, grew connoiſſeurs in the arts, and commenced philoſophers, ſophiſts, and critics in taſte. That noble ſimplicity of manners, that inccorruptible integrity

integrity in office, that determined patriotiſm for which they were once celebrated, no longer formed the national characteriſtic of the Roman people. It was now that an elegantly chaſed ſilver vaſe could excite a Roman pro-conſul to the moſt flagitious acts of tyranny and violence. It was now that the provinces, reduced to beggary by the rapacity of their governors, groaned under the yoke of a power which they had once looked up to for protection. It was now that the gold of a Jugurtha could tempt a venal ſenate to wink at the moſt profligate heights of villainy and oppreſſion. It was now that poverty was deſpiſed, and that wealth, though united to diſhoneſty, was courted. It was now that factions were formed, that votes were ſold to the beſt bidder, and that men were no longer called to an account for their peculations on the people.

This entire change of manners and ſentiments in the Roman people, produced as entire a change in their public and domeſtic education. In the firſt, the infection of example, the communication of depraved opinions, and the encouragement given to ſucceſsful vice, could not fail of ſtimulating the paſſions in its ſervice.

In the ſecond, the precepts of a phyloſophic tutor delivered in the ſchools, could not act as a counterbalance to the weight of parental influence, the contagion of example, and thoſe various modes which

which are employed by corrupt perſons to deprave the native ſimplicity and honeſty of their offſpring. But in the moſt corrupt ſocieties, there will always be found ſome perſons who, from a ſingularity in their ſituation, temper, and education, differ in every reſpect from the common herd. The precepts of philoſophy moderated the ambition of Cicero, and rendered him almoſt as diſtinguiſhed for his virtues as his genius. And the ſimplicity and virtue of ancient manners united to the graces of learning, ſhone conſpicuous in the character of Cato. But Rome in theſe degenerate days, gave birth to no other citizen equal in merit to her Cato. Her ſons were in general of the moſt profligate kind; her Catalines, her Clodius's, her Anthony's, and her Cæſars, filled her city with their enormities, and at length ſubdued her liberties, and turned her mighty empire of freedom into an abſolute deſpotiſm.

LETTER

LETTER V.

Obſervations on the State of the Romans after the Subverſion of the Commonwealth.

THE natural equality of man, Hortenſia, is a truth which forces itſelf on candid attention, and diſpels from the reluctant mind thoſe prejudices, which national proſperity, or individual greatneſs, engrafts on human ſelfiſhneſs. We are fond of availing ourſelves of ſituation, and of making compariſons which gratify our pride and conceit. Perſons even of deep reflection have pretended to diſcover an apparent difference in the mental qualities of the inhabitants of the eaſt and the north, and have given to the effect of climate thoſe virtues which alone depend on moral cauſes. Others, with an audacity more blameable, have dared to tax the Deity with partiality. They give to their own colour only, the quality of external beauty; and they perſuade themſelves, that the ſwarthy inhabitants of India and Africa, are a degree below them in the ſcale of intelligent Nature.

It is true, that moſt of the European ſtates have at this day an apparent ſuperiority in government, in arts, and in arms, to the inhabitants of Aſia

and Africa. But if we reflect on the rise and fall of nations, we shall find, that accident alone, without the assistance of internal excellence, has produced this superiority, and that it has appeared and disappeared in the same society, as accident was favourable or unfavourable to its existence.

It is to the inhabitants of Asia that we owe the rudiments both of the sciences and the arts; and the savage barbarism which is now displayed on the sultry shores of Africa, has at some period or another been exceeded in every country of Europe.

The Romans themselves, Hortensia, are an incontestable example of the effect of accident, situation, and government, on national character and prosperity. In the history of this wonderful people we behold the extremes of virtue and vice, of greatness and meanness, of felicity and wretchedness, predominant according to the situation into which they were carried by the course of things. Cincinnatus returning from conquest and sovereign rule to cultivate his little farm with his own hands, presents to the mind the sublimest image of national character that human society can afford.

If you are amused with moral contrasts, Hortensia, compare the conduct of the consul Curius and that of Caius Cæsar, under the obligation of similar trusts. The one, on being arraigned for diverting to his private use the spoils of the enemy,

sub-

ſubſtantially proved, that out of an immenſe treaſure he had only detained a ſmall wooden veſſel, which he intended for the purpoſes of private devotion. The other, appropriated from Gallic ſpoils a treaſure ſufficient to repair his ruined fortune, and to bribe over half his countrymen to his intereſt. Yet in the faireſt days of Rome, the integrity of Curius was not more perſonally ſingular, than in its declenſion from virtue was the corruption of Cæſar. The Romans of Cæſar's days were derived from the ſame ſtock as were the Cincinnati; and if we may believe the tale of hiſtory, the ſtock which produced this race of demi-gods, were a handful of deſperate adventurers, who had a ſettlement to ſeek, and who procured one by ſeizing and occupying a ſmall ſpot of unapropriated land in Italy.

What then, will you ſay, were thoſe important cauſes which, under the direction of Providence, laid the foundation of Roman greatneſs, and continued to operate with ſuch an unexampled ſucceſs? Thoſe important cauſes, Hortenſia, were all compriſed in the warlike abilities of the firſt kings of Rome; in the well-timed prediction of the future greatneſs of the city; and in the philoſophic virtues and legiſlative abilities of Numa Pompilius. It was the laws, the example, the precepts, and the active wiſdom of this great man, which

gave to Roman manners and cuſtoms a ſuperiority over all the ſtates of Italy.

It has been already ſhewn in a preceding letter, that Rome owed the firſt ſteps of her aggrandizement, more to the rectitude of her counſels than to the proweſs of her arms. This aggrandizement however, by introducing an alteration in the ſtate of things, introduced a change in the national character of the Romans. Their public counſels were corrupted by the luſt of conqueſt; and their private manners, by the poſſeſſion of riches and power. The ſpoils of conquered nations flowed in with a full tide on the commonwealth, and offered to individuals the moſt inviting opportunities for rapacity and plunder. The abuſe of power and riches was carried by the Romans to its higheſt exceſs. Their ſlaves were innumerable; and they were treated with a cruel indignity. Their public ſhows, both from their expenſive magnificence, and the nature of the exhibition, were adapted both to debauch their taſte, and to render them callous to the feelings of humanity. The ſimplicity and frugality of primitive times were turned to every mode of luxury which invention could furniſh, either to delight the ſenſe, to ſooth the caprice of taſte, or gratify the pride of wealth. Poverty was no longer honourable; it was treated with ſcorn and inſult. Moderation in the enjoyments of appetite, gave way

way to the moſt vicious exceſs; and when the proſcription of the laſt triumvirate had carried off all the leaders of the patriot band, there hardly remained a veſtige either of public or private virtue in the whole empire.

From the imperfection of our nature, our virtues have their neceſſary limits. The down-hill road of vice and depravity preſents a free and uninterrupted courſe. The Romans, in the days of Auguſtus, when compared to the ſame people in the days of Cincinnatus, will fill a virtuous mind with diſguſt and contempt. Yet when we look forward from this ſtage of their corruption, to the period when Chriſtianity gained a legal eſtabliſhment under Conſtantine, we ſhall find that the manners of the Auguſtan age were pure, in compariſon with the ſucceeding periods of the empire. With a well acted hypocriſy, Auguſtus endeavoured to colour his treſpaſſes againſt decency and public opinion, and to provide for his reputation, by making an edict againſt lampoons and ſatires. At this period, Cornelius Siſenna was reproached in full ſenate with the licentious conduct of his wife; but theſe lingering remains of old prejudices did not long continue to alarm or moleſt imperial voluptuouſneſs; and thoſe vices, which in the decline of the commonwealth could be attacked by the nice and delicate ſatire of Horace, grew to a height under the emperors, that

modern language cannot deſcribe. In ſhort, Hortenſia, the groſs luxury of the Romans under a Nero, an Heliogabulus, and other ſovereigns of ſimilar character, is neither fit for me to particularize, nor you to read. Nor can I give you a more adequate idea of it, than you will receive from the following deſcription of the cleareſt and moſt lively hiſtorian that modern times has produced: "Confining ourſelves to the public ſcenes diſplayed before the Roman people, (ſays Mr. Gibbon) and atteſted by grave and contemporary hiſtorians, their inexpreſſible infamy ſurpaſſes that of any other age or country. The luxuries of an eaſtern monarch are ſecluded from the eye of curioſity by the walls of a ſeraglio. The ſentiments of honour and gallantry have introduced a refinement of pleaſure, a regard to decency, and a reſpect for the public opinion into the modern courts of Europe; but the corrupt and opulent nobles of Rome, gratified every vice that could be collected from the mighty conflux of nations and manners. Secure of impunity, careleſs of cenſure, they lived without reſtraint in the patient and humble ſociety of their ſlaves and paraſites. The emperor, in his turn, viewing every rank of his ſubjects with the ſame contemptuous indifference, aſſerted without controul his ſovereign privilege of taſte and luxury.

Enjoyment, whilſt it relaxes the powers of the mind,

mind, is ſuppoſed to ſoften the aſperities of temper; and that in proportion as men become luxurious, they become tractable and open to the impreſſions of the ſofter paſſions. That point of moral depravity then, which unites the higheſt exceſs of ſelf indulgence with a complacency for the miſery of others, can never be deſcribed without raiſing ſentiments of indignant horror; yet ſuch is the repreſentation of Roman manners, even at ſo early a period of deſpotiſm, as the reign of Nero. This frantic tyrant found it convenient for his reputation to lay the fire of Rome on the Chriſtians *, who, from the novelty of their doctrines, and their oppoſition to paganiſm, were always obnoxious to popular clamour. A feſtival of the moſt extraordinary kind was prepared to reinſtate the emperor in the good graces of his ſubjects. The gardens of Nero were decorated in the moſt ſumptuous manner; booths were erected, where perſons of all ranks were regaled with the moſt exquiſite wine and viands; and where every kind of debauchery was purſued without diſturbance or moleſtation. A horſe race, which was honoured with the preſence of the emperor, who mingled with the populace in the dreſs

* Mr. Gibbon is in doubt whether theſe Galileans, as Tacitus terms them, were Chriſtians, who in the beginning were diſtinguiſhed by that title, or ſome frantic zealots who followed the ſtandard of Judas the Gaulonite, who had raiſed arms againſt the Roman power.

and attitude of a charioteer, had a place in the innoxious part of the ſpectacle. But what will you ſay, Hortenſia, to the exhibition of Chriſtians nailed to croſſes; of others ſown up in the ſkins of wild beaſts, and thus expoſed to the fury of dogs; of others again, ſmeared over with combuſtible materials, ſet aloft on pillars, and made to ſerve as torches to illuminate the darkneſs of the night.

The faithful hiſtorian who relates theſe ſufferings of the Chriſtians, ſays, that their agonies were embittered with the ſcorn and deriſion of the ſpectators; but there wants not this addition to the picture, to complete either the horror of the ſcene, or the ſtrength of your ſentiments, which I dare ſay are replete with a ſcorn and indignation equal to what the good Pompilius would have felt, could he have foreſeen the infamy of that day.

LETTER

LETTER VI.

Cauſes which may have hitherto prevented Chriſtianity from having its full Effect on the Manners of Society.

IN the foregoing letters which I have written to you, Hortenſia, I have noticed ſome of thoſe leading cuſtoms in the republics of Sparta, Athens, and Rome, which ſtamped a national character on their citizens, and gave them a relative excellence over other ſocieties.

Roman fortitude, patriotiſm, and ſimplicity, are virtues which have been but faintly copied by men bred under the light of goſpel morality; and the Chriſtian world would ſuffer much in a compariſon with the Romans of the firſt four centuries after the building of the imperial city.

To account for ſo ſtrange a phenomenon, it will be neceſſary to recal to our obſervation, that the period when the doctrine of Chriſtianity was firſt propagated among men, though aptly fitted for the purpoſe of its extenſion, was very unfavourable to the purity of its votaries. The birth of the Meſſiah was in the very commencement of Roman ſlavery, when the Romans had loſt every

every primitive virtue both political and moral; and when Chriſtianity became the eſtabliſhed religion of the empire, the declenſion of Roman manners had touched the loweſt point of moral depravity. Venality, inſolence, ſervility, were vices that grew out of the very forms of the government, corrupted every part of ſociety, and took deep root. Whilſt Rome continued under the form of a republic, her citizens contenting themſelves with ſubſtantial power, had left to the vanity of eaſtern ſlaves and deſpots, the forms of oſtentatious greatneſs, and preſerved to the very extinction of their liberty, a ſimplicity of manners well adapted to the practice of the Chriſtian virtues. But when, for the diſtinction of perſonal merit and influence, an artificial ſubordination adapted to the ſupport of family deſpotiſm was eſtabliſhed; when thoſe plain epithets which had been uſed to the greateſt of the human race, became only the appellations annexed to vulgar life; when a menial office about the perſon of the prince exalted the citizen in the ſcale of rank above thoſe who bore the firſt civil offices in the empire; when the fantaſtic titles of "your honor, your excellency, your eminence, your illuſtrious highneſs," &c. &c. were conſidered as rewards for perſonal ſervice; it was then that the empire of corruption muſt have been univerſal, and muſt have ſtifled in the hearts of men thoſe ſentiments

ſentiments of humanity and genuine integrity which had been acquired by the graces of the goſpel.

When that perſecution was withdrawn, which helped to curb the intemperance of the paſſions; when the epiſcopal order were freely admitted to the converſation of the ſovereign, and made part of the corrupt court at Conſtantinople; when, to uſe the expreſſion of an elegant writer, the Chriſtians were advanced to thoſe ſituations from which virtue either retires or is ſubdued, they began to doubt its neceſſary efficacy, and found it no difficult taſk to perſuade themſelves, that the ceremonies of religion were a convenient ſuccedaneum for practical goodneſs, and that a ſaving faith was not altogether incompatible with a life of ſin.

Where the Barbarians had rendered themſelves the maſters of the Roman empire, they univerſally adopted the religion, the laws, and the cuſtoms of the conquered. Thus the morals of the Chriſtians were not mended by their misfortunes. Some vices peculiar to a ſtate of barbariſm were added to the catalogue of Roman enormities; every thing miſchievous in the policy of Conſtantine and his ſucceſſors was engrafted in the Gothic conſtitutions. Europe is to this day ſwayed by the principles of their government; and all our prejudices, manners,

manners, and ceremonies, owe their origin to the ſame corrupt ſource.

Much has been ſaid of the progreſs of modern civilization, but it certainly has ſo little tended to bring us back to claſſic ſimplicity, that we are every day departing more and more from it; and vanity, with the extenſion of our ideas on the article of luxury, bids fair to extinguiſh ſome of the moſt uſeful of the moral virtues out of the human character.

It muſt be owned, that experimental philoſophy has produced many diſcoveries in this age, which has greatly encreaſed the limits of human enjoyment. And if our improvement in the uſeful arts of life were properly adapted to the improvement of human ſentiment, many of thoſe vices which deform the preſent age might be reformed; for it is certain, that mind in man is ſo intimately connected with ſenſe, that it is impoſſible to mortify the one without impoveriſhing the other. The manners of that people will be barbarous whoſe cuſtoms are groſs; and virtue, by a wiſe diſpoſition of things, will be found to be in union with a reaſonable enjoyment. That human ſentiment is yet in a low and barbarous ſtate, the abuſe of power which the brute creation ſuffer from our hands, bears a melancholy teſtimony. I mention this as a notorious inſtance of the ſtate of modern barbariſm, becauſe the cruelties committed

on

on brutes are unprovoked. But even the wanton manner in which we ſpill the blood of our offending citizens, gives a dark complexion to the character of the times; and if after ages ſhould produce ſocieties refined to an exalted pitch of humanity, with what ſurprize and deteſtation will they regard their anceſtors of the eighteenth century.

As ſeveral good men have, notwithſtanding theſe untoward appearances, promiſed to themſelves a return of the golden age, as depictured by the poets, it may not, Hortenſia, be an unentertaining ſpeculation, to examine the utility of ſuch means as ſhall appear to us the moſt likely to conduce to the higheſt degree, and the moſt univerſal extent of poſſible good.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

Duty of Governments towards Producing a general Civilization.

BEFORE we enter into the examination of ſuch means, Hortenſia, as ſhall appear to us the moſt likely to conduce to the higheſt degree, and the moſt univerſal extent of poſſible good, we muſt enquire into the nature of thoſe high and important obligations which, in the reaſon of things, muſt be annexed to the office of government.

What may be the nature and extent of thoſe duties of government which, on a principle of equity, ſubjects have a right to demand for all the ſplendid gifts they beſtow on their governors, is a queſtion which ſo nearly concerns the intereſts of man, that it becomes a matter of wonder the accuracy of their reaſoning ſhould not, in this point, have produced an uniformity of opinion. But important as is this ſubject, there is no ſpeculation on which a greater variety of opinions have been formed, on which the prejudices of the ſpecies have been more at war with their intereſts, or on which the feebleneſs or the inactivity of the

reaſoning powers have been more expoſed, or which more proves man to be the ſlave of cuſtom and of precept.

It is well known, that a great part of the ancient, and even of the modern world, have made a deity of their government, in whoſe high prerogatives they have buried all their natural rights. The monſtrous faith of millions made for one; has been at different times adopted by the greater part of civilized ſocieties; and even thoſe enlightened nations who have been the moſt famed for aſſerting and defending their liberties, ran into another ſpecies of idolatry, which is almoſt as much at war with the happineſs of individuals. Inſtead of making a deity of the government, they made a deity of the ſociety in its aggregate capacity; and to the real or imagined intereſts of this idol, they ſacrificed the deareſt intereſts of thoſe individuals who formed the aggregate. Thus they reverſed a very plain and reaſonable propoſition. Society with them was not formed for the happineſs of its citizens, but the life and happineſs of every citizen was to be devoted to the glory and welfare of the ſociety.

When the happineſs of an individual is properly conſidered, his intereſt will be found ſo intimately connected with the intereſts of the ſociety of which he is a member, that he cannot act in conformity to the one, without having a proper con-

conſideration for the other. But reaſon will revolt againſt a ſervice for which it finds no adequate return; and when we admire the virtue of the ancients, we admire only that inflexible conduct which carried them to ſacrifice every perſonal intereſt to principle.

The moderns are grown ſo lax in their devotions to the ſhrine of patriotiſm, as to bury in the ruins of public virtue all good faith and common honeſty; a depravity in manners, which too plainly manifeſts that the change of conduct proceeds from the total want of principle, rather than from the having formed juſt ones. We have indeed made no accurate definitions either on the duties of government, or on the duties of a good citizen; and individuals, from the prevalent power of cuſtom and precept, are content with privations which have no foundation in the common good.

Man is ever apt to run into extremes; no ſooner do we diſcard one groſs error, than we deviate into another of an oppoſite nature. It is ſaid, that truth is always to be found in the mean; if ſo, thoſe muſt differ widely from her, who, to avoid the evil of ſuch a power as is claimed by deſpots, of interfering with all private as well as public concerns, aſſert, that the true and only office of government, is to act the part of a good conſtable in preſerving the public peace.

Thus, according to the opinion of the moſt liberal

liberal of the moderns, governors have little elſe to do but to eat and drink, and to enjoy all the various emoluments annexed to the diadem and the purple, without diſturbing their repoſe by fulfilling any of thoſe parental duties which ſubjects, in their political connexion, have a much greater right to expect from their ſovereign, than children have to expect from their natural parent; for where much is given, much may with juſtice be required.

The marquis of Beccario, in his excellent treatiſe on crimes and puniſhments aſſerts, that government has no right to puniſh delinquency in its ſubjects, without having previouſly taken care to inſtruct them in the knowledge of the laws, and of thoſe duties in public and private life which are agreeable to the dictates of moral rectitude. This obſervation coincides with that ſtrain of benevolence which runs through the whole of this excellent treatiſe. For not to dwell on the high injuſtice of aſſuming the power of puniſhment, without fulfilling the duties of inſtruction, it muſt be obvious to enlightened reaſon, that the ſublime office of government conſiſts in limiting, as far as the nature of things will allow, the bounds of evil, and extending the bounds of good. And thus much may be ſaid, that whatever be the ſanguine expectations formed from ſome uſeful diſcoveries made in the ſcience of phyſics, the conveniences and the happineſs enjoyed by the

generality of the world, will continue to be very moderate, unleſs the united force of ſociety is ſteadily uſed to carry on the glorious work of improvement.

The education of the people, in the moſt extenſive ſenſe of this word, may be ſaid to comprehend the moſt important duties of government. For as the education of individuals is for ever going on, and conſiſts of all the impreſſions received through the organs of ſenſe, from the hour of birth to the hour of death; public education, if well adapted to the improvement of man, muſt comprehend good laws, good examples, good cuſtoms, a proper uſe of the arts, and wiſe inſtructions conveyed to the mind, by the means of language, in the way of ſpeech and writing.

LETTER VIII.

Sympathy—Equity.

IF we trace, Hortenſia, the origin of thoſe virtues in man, which render him fit for the benign offices of life, we ſhall find that they all center in ſympathy. For had the mind of man been totally diveſted of this affection, it would not in all probability have ever attained any ideas of equity. Yes, it was the movements of ſympathy which firſt inclined man to a forbearance of his own gratifications, in reſpect to the feelings of his fellow creatures; and his reaſon ſoon approved the dictates of his inclination. A ſtrict adherence to the principles of equity, may be ſaid to include the perfection of moral rectitude. This being granted, all human virtue will be found to proceed from equity; conſequently, if the principle of equity itſelf owes its ſource in the human mind to the feelings of ſympathy, all human virtue muſt derive its ſource from this uſeful affection.

When this benign affection holds a ſuperiority in the mind to other affections, inclination will lead to the performance of the duties of humanity. But in thoſe inſenſible minds where this

affection is originally weak, or where it is extinguished by the excess of hostile passions, equity, unsupported by benevolence, has either no place in the mind, or through the cold precept of tuition, bears a feeble sway.

We have reason to believe that all the passions which belong to humanity lie latent in every mind; but we find by experience that they continue inactive till put in motion by the influence of some corresponding impression; and that their growth and prevalence in a great measure depends on the repetition of those impressions which are in their nature adapted to affect them. Thus it will appear, that where we have power to direct the course of impression, we have power to command the state of the passions; and as laws, example, precept, and custom, are the prime sources of all our impressions, it must be greatly in the power of government to effect, by a proper use of these sources, that improvement on which true civilization depends.

It is known, that the power of custom over the mind arises from such a repetition of the same impression, as act to the weakening or destroying the force of every impression of a contrary tendency. Could we therefore, by the spirit of our laws, exclude from society the operation of every impression which partook of the smallest tincture of cruelty, and did we encourage the operation of

every impreſſion which had a benevolent tendency, it appears probable, that we ſhould exalt the ſympathizing feeling to a degree which might act more forcibly than the coercion of rigorous laws—to the reſtraining all acts of violence, and conſequently all acts which militate againſt the public peace.

For example, were government to act on ſo liberal a ſentiment of benevolence, as to take under the protection of law the happineſs of the brute ſpecies, ſo far as to puniſh in offenders that rigorous, that barbarous treatment they meet with in the courſe of their uſeful ſervices, would it not tend to encreaſe ſympathy? would it not highly enlarge our notions of equity, by pointing out to public obſervation this moral truth, that tenderneſs is due to thoſe creatures, without whoſe daily labour ſociety would be bereaved of every enjoyment which renders exiſtence comfortable?

When a large and gentle bullock, ſays Mandeville, after having reſiſted a ten times greater force of blows than would have killed his murderer, falls ſtunned at laſt, and his armed head is faſtened to the ground with cords, as ſoon as the wide wound is made, and the jugulars are cut aſunder, what mortal can, without compaſſion, hear the painful bellowings intercepted by his blood, the bitter ſighs that ſpeak the ſharpneſs of his anguiſh, and the deep ſounding groans with loud anxiety

fetched from the bottom of his ſtrong and palpitating heart; or ſee the trembling and violent convulſions of his limbs, the reeking gore ſtreaming from his wounds, and his ſtruggling gaſps, and laſt efforts for life, the certain ſigns of his approaching fate.

Mandeville is miſtaken; ſo forcible is the power of habit, that theſe dreadful ſights are daily ſeen without exciting horror, or one ſoft tear or ſigh of ſympathy; and conſequently, habits ſuch as theſe, muſt tend to weaken and even to deſtroy this heavenly quality. Oh! then let all ſlaughter houſes be treated as nuiſances; let them be ſequeſtered from the haunts of men; let premiums be given to thoſe who can find out the leaſt painful manner of taking away the lives of thoſe animals which are neceſſary for ſuſtenance; let every other manner of depriving them of life be forbidden, under ſevere penalties; let the privation of life, by way of ſport and amuſement, be diſcouraged by example and precept; and it is more than probable, that ſuch a ſpirit of benevolence will be diffuſed over the minds of the public, as may tend to the general practice of thoſe virtues which reaſon approves, and which Chriſtianity ordains.

It has been a queſtion lately much agitated, whether any ſuch neceſſity exiſts, as is pretended, of depriving thoſe delinquents of their lives, who act againſt the public peace by treaſonable offences,

ſences, and by injuring a fellow citizen's life or property. Thoſe who take the benevolent ſide of the queſtion, maintain, that the depriving a citizen of his life, is a breach of one of the fundamental obligations of government, and that there may be found a variety of puniſhments more fully adequate to the preſervation of the public peace, than acts of violence which ſhock the ſenſibility of the feeling mind, and harden to a ſtate of barbariſm the unfeeling one. Thoſe who take the adverſe ſide of the queſtion, oppoſe theſe poſitions with many plauſible arguments; but whether the neceſſity contended for really exiſts in the nature of things, or whether it exiſts only in the indolence of government, and their inattention to the happineſs of the community in their individual capacity, certain it is, that the intereſts of humanity and the dictates of good policy, require that the examples of taking away life ſhould be as few as the nature of things will admit. That all the ceremonies which attend this melancholy act, ſhould be made as aweful as poſſible; and that to prevent the public from receiving any impreſſion which may ſhock the compaſſionate part of the ſociety, or contribute to ſteal the hearts of the more inſenſible, all executions ſhould be performed in private.

The Engliſh, from the number of their charitable donations, from the heavy taxes they lay

on themſelves to maintain their poor, and above all, for that general diffuſion of ſentiment, which in a late attempt * on the life of his Majeſty, deterred the moſt ſervile courtier of the train to compliment their prince at the expence of juſtice and humanity, have proved themſelves to be in a comparative ſenſe, a benevolent people. Yet the long liſt of wretches who, on particular ſeaſons of the year, are led out to execution without exciting a ſufficient ſympathy in the public to ſtop for an inſtant the career of trifling diſſipation, proves too ſtrongly that the Engliſh, like their neighbours, are yet in a ſtate of barbariſm. A moments attention to the melancholy ſituation into which a fellow creature is reduced, for errors from which we are preſerved by a more happy deſtiny, is ſufficient to ſpread the gloom of ſorrow over a reflecting mind; and as every indulgence of ſentiment tends to ſtrengthen its force, ſuch ſolemnities ſhould be uſed at executions, as might ſerve to augment the compaſſion of the ſympatizing, and raiſe terror in the gay and the thoughtleſs.

Civilized Rome never ſaw ſcaffolds ſtained with the blood of her citizens; and ſhe granted civic crowns to thoſe who preſerved their lives. The moderns have too widely departed from this line of policy, and in ſo doing have relaxed the ties of ſocial life. Would it not be graceful, would it

* The caſe of Margaret Nicholſon.

not

not be ſetting a due eſtimation on the life of a citizen, were the ſupreme magiſtrate, in the tender character of a political parent, with the judge who is neceſſitated by the duties of his office to paſs the fatal ſentence, to put on black, and to continue this garb of mourning till after the execution of the criminal? Would it not be raiſing uſeful impreſſions in the minds of the public, were the following ſolemnities to be uſed at the execution? The priſoner to be conducted to the place of puniſhment with a long train of the officers of juſtice, and their proper attendants, in mourning. The train to be led up by an officer of ſtate, with the ſword of juſtice elevated in his hand. The officer of ſtate to be immediately followed by the officers of juſtice, and they by the executioner, with the inſtruments of his office; the executioner to be immediately followed by the criminal; the criminal to be followed by perſons dreſſed in black, bearing his coffin; the proceſſion to be cloſed by the inferior officers of juſtice and their aſſiſtants, and all the bells in the city to be made to toll during the paſſing of the proceſſion.

To give ſtrength to the impreſſions which theſe ſolemnities are calculated to make, the ſeat of execution, in the form of a large ſquare, fenced in with high walls, ſhould be placed at the further end of the city; the ſword of juſtice, and other emblematical pieces of ſculpture, may ornament its gates,

gates, and over them may be written in large capitals, "*Theſe are the gates which lead to death.*" At the entrance of this tremendous ſquare the multitude ought to be diſmiſſed, and none but the officers of juſtice with their attendants, the executioner, and the criminal with his relations or friends, be permitted to enter. After the execution, the body ought to be interred in a burying ground adjoining to the ſquare, and kept ſacred for that purpoſe. The proceſſion ſhould return with the ſame ſolemnities with which it ſet out; and all public amuſements or meetings, of a diſſipated kind, ſhould be prohibited on this day.

LETTER IX.

Obſervations on Penal Laws—Houſes of Correction —Charity.

AFTER all that may with juſtice, Hortenſia, be ſaid on the ſanguinary ſpirit of our penal laws, we ſhall be obliged to come to this melancholy concluſion;—that the obſtacles to their reformation are ſo deeply rooted in the vices of ſociety, as to allow of no hopes of amendment. For whilſt artificial life ſets forth, as in the preſent age, a variety of temptations adapted to captivate the imagination, and inflame to a maddening heighth the cupidity of our ſpecies — whilſt even our clergy affect to fling off the reſtraints of religion;— whilſt the contagion of example, and a participation in their vicious amuſements, renders the poorer claſs of our citizens as luxurious as the rich; whilſt the idle attendants on the great, more numerous than the induſtrious poor, contract all the wants and vices of opulence; our poſſeſſions, to uſe the words of an elegant writer, muſt be paled up with ſanguinary edicts, and hung round with gibbets to ſcare every invader.

Great hopes I know have been founded on the new

new inſtitution of ſunday ſchools; but whilſt a commerce with the world offers ſo many temptations and ſo many ſnares, the knowledge which can be gained by this method of inſtruction will hardly ſerve as an adequate means to protect the innocence of youth.

However, if theſe ſchools ſhould ſave even a ſmall number from the gallows, they ought not to be neglected. But as we are now examining that part of civil policy which tends to meliorate the ſtate of the poor, and reform their manners, let us extend our enquiries to thoſe defects in our laws, and thoſe abuſes in the exerciſe of power, which have been recommended to the conſideration of the public, by the philanthropic Mr. Howard, now loſt to ſociety.

It has been the cuſtom of all Europe to puniſh the leſſer offences againſt the peace and good order of ſociety, by branding, whipping, pillory, and other ſuch like modes of diſcipline. Theſe were introduced no doubt with the deſign of ſtrengthening the motives for good conduct, by awakening that ſenſe of ſhame which education and the pride of nature impreſſes on every mind; but it is to be conſidered, that when ſuch public circumſtances of diſgrace are once ſuffered, ſhame has no longer its influence over the mind, and thoſe incentives can no longer exiſt which are the moſt likely to produce reformation. A citizen thus

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marked with the indelible ſtain of infamy, has loſt the means of providing for his wants in the way of an honeſt induſtry; and as it is natural that he ſhould harbour in his boſom a reſentment to that ſociety by whom he is ruined, he will be ſtrongly tempted to retaliate on the public by a courſe of violence and rapine.

Houſes of correction where the minor offences are puniſhed by employing the offenders in taſks of labor, have alſo made part of the police of all the European ſocieties. But to the ſhame of Great-Britain it muſt be ſpoken, that we have conſidered the future happineſs or amendment of our fellow citizens ſo little worth our notice, that theſe houſes are better adapted to the eradicating out of the mind every principle of virtue, than to the correction of vice.

When delinquents are brought into one of theſe houſes, they are under the neceſſity of aſſociating with the moſt abandoned profligates in the whole ſociety; thus their habits become totally depraved, and thus wretches, who are encloſed for the commiſſion of one crime, are returned to ſociety fitted for the perpetration of thouſands.

In other ſocieties, whoſe inhabitants are not ſo entirely taken up with their pleaſures or with the buſineſs of a political and mercantile traffic, ſome care is taken to render ſuch houſes of confinement, houſes of amendment. Every perſon encloſed is

kept

kept by himſelf; ſolitude affords him time for reflection; and inſtead of receiving pernicious impreſſions by the converſation and actions of profligates, he is only viſited by thoſe whoſe office it is to lay before him every argument for reformation.

Such houſes of confinement as have been uſed for the impriſonment of debtors, and for the ſecurity of thoſe perſons who are to ſtand a trial for public crimes, have been found more defective for every purpoſe that humanity or good policy would dictate, than even the houſes of correction. Here the innocent and the guilty are equally involved in an abyſs of miſery, which often terminates in conſequences as fatal to the life of the priſoner, as the moſt capital of our puniſhments. Here are to be ſeen imprudent ſpendthrifts, and priſoners only on ſuſpicion, in want of every neceſſary of life: their lodging ſuch as muſt produce in the moſt vigorous conſtitutions the ſlow diſeaſe which undermines the principles of health, and ſubjected to the contagion of thoſe maladies which terminate exiſtence by one of the moſt painful modes of bodily ſuffering.

Such monſtrous abuſes of power, and neglect of legiſlative duties, Hortenſia, have been in too good hands for me to enter on any plans of reform. Mr. Howard's labors have already produced very good effects in many parts of this iſland, and if you

you wiſh to be further acquainted with the ſubject, I recommend you to the peruſal of a pamphlet publiſhed by Capel Lofft, Eſq. of Suffolk, a gentleman, who has devoted very diſtinguiſhed abilities to the cauſe of humanity, and who has written on almoſt every topic important to its intereſt. The title of the pamphlet is, "Thoughts on the Conſtruction and Polity of Priſons, &c. &c."

On leaving the ſubject of public priſons and houſes of correction, let us enter on the more grateful taſk of examining thoſe various eſtabliſhments, formed on the principle of affording the relief of medicine to the ſick. There are many abuſes undoubtedly crept into all theſe inſtitutions, which want the inſpection of a Howard, and the attention of power; but however they may have deviated from the intention of the founders, they are all of them uſeful. And I wiſh the principle was extended to the building hoſpitals for incurables; for no incident can ſhock a feeling mind more than the ſeeing a forlorn wretch turned out of an hoſpital, to encounter all the horrors of want, under the heavy burthen of a lingering, painful, and fatal diſeaſe.

The great ſums of money which are given away in this country in private and public acts of charity, with the ample proviſion the law has made for paupers, has reflected ſome luſtre on the na-

tional character of the Engliſh; but it is very doubtful whether any great meaſure of good hath been obtained by theſe overflowings of opulence. The certainty even of ſo miſerable a pittance as is ſufficient to keep off the terrors of ſtarving, muſt often draw the inſenſible and the idle into ſituations which might have been avoided by an active induſtry.

If our pariſh workhouſes were upon a plan adapted to cheriſh and comfort life in its moſt helpleſs and decrepid ſtate, they would be more expenſive than the relieving the indigent; in modes more agreeable to that natural love of freedom impreſſed on every breaſt. At preſent, they are equally places of puniſhment, and liable to the exceptions which have been made to the houſes of correction.

Without ſtarting any invidious doubts as to the benevolent motives which may influence the authors and encouragers of acts of private and public charity, I muſt repeat my obſervation, that money is often a ſecondary good to the aſſiſtance which may be afforded the diſtreſſed in a variety of other ways; and that even where money is neceſſary for the relief of an object, a ſmall degree of additional trouble in the manner of adminiſtering it, and the accompanying it with our advice and influence in ſociety, would render it more uſeful than if the ſum given had been

been trebled in value. Unfortunately we miſtake the parting with what our opulence renders of little worth in our eyes, for that ſolid virtue, without which, as St. Paul ſays, the moſt dazzling modes of charity are of no account. Of thoſe who tread the giddy rounds of faſhionable life, are there any who regard it as a part of neceſſary goodneſs to give up a ſmall portion of their time to the happineſs of others? Hence it is that almoſt all charities, both private and public, are moſt ſhamefully abuſed, and rendered totally inadequate to the purpoſes intended. Whilſt this idle ſpirit continues among us, we may accumulate tax upon tax, and never truly relieve the diſtreſſes of the poor. For no law can poſſibly anſwer the benevolent purpoſes of the legiſlature, but one that entirely takes the executive part out of the hands of thoſe who have an intereſt in abuſing the truſt, and whoſe mean ſituations in life and low education render them deaf to the voice of ſympathy, and callous to the ſtings of remorſe.

But ſhall the fine gentleman and lady leave the pleaſures that belong to opulence, and amuſe themſelves in the drudgery of buſineſs for the advantage of wretches fed by public charity? Shall the cares of the toilette, the pleaſures of the chace, the gaming table, and all the innumerable, &c. &c. which help to fill up the time of the ſons and daughters of fortune, be laid aſide for a

ſyſtem of accounts and œcónomy, never uſed in the management of their own concerns—and this without any probability of gaining by it a title, or reaping the diſtinctions or emoluments of office? forbid it faſhion—forbid it common ſenſe!

I am aware, Hortenſia, that the habits adopted by the gay and rich, and the common received notion, that a pleaſurable life is the only way in which the advantages of fortune can be enjoyed, will raiſe inſurmountable obſtacles and objections to my opinion on the real duties of charity. To theſe objections, there is but one anſwer to be given, but that is a ſtrong one, viz. That thoſe who prize pleaſure beyond ſatisfaction, have never experienced the ſuperiority of the latter in the ſcale of happineſs. That the virtues, like the vices, will by habit and indulgence grow into deſires, and to the fruition of the virtuous deſires, God in his wiſdom and bounty has annexed an enjoyment unmixed with any alloy of diſappointment and ſuffering. Benevolence is one of the moſt animating of the moral principles; and were it really felt and practiſed by the faſhionable world, it would entirely ſubdue the dæmon *Ennui*, who drives our nobility and opulent gentry from the terreſtrial paradiſes they enjoy in this iſland, to hunt after happineſs in every place of public reſort both at home and on the continent.

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The ſums that are yearly ſpent by our travelling gentry in Germany, Italy, and France, if laid out in judicious modes of charity and domeſtic hoſpitality, might be returned in a ſtock of enjoyment that would both invigorate and enliven the mind, and render it ſenſible to the ſoft and tranquil pleaſures that an elegant retreat affords.

LETTER X.

Hints towards a more general Civilization by an Attention to the Objects of Senſe.

IT is known, Hortenſia, that the ancients held the opinion, that man is compoſed of two ſubſtances. That the nature of the one is intellectual, and its eſſence is pure. That the other is compoſed of groſs matter, and conſequently has no intellectual powers; that it is impure in its nature, and ſubject to a variety of infirmities. Theſe two diſtinct ſubſtances termed ſoul and body, were ſuppoſed to be intimately connected in the human conſtitution, and to act in ſuch a manner, one upon the other, as to exalt or debaſe the individual, as this or that principle prevailed.

On theſe grounds of reaſoning, the beſt of the ancient philoſophers, however they might differ on other points, uniformly argued that the duty of man, as a rational agent, conſiſts in preſerving the ſoul from the defilements to which it is liable whilſt the connexion between theſe ſubſtances continue. That the motions of the carnal part, and their influence over the ſoul, render its ſituation critical and dangerous; that a ſtrict guard is

to be kept againſt the incentives of ſenſe; and that to maintain the full empire of reaſon, the body muſt be kept in a mortified ſtate. The enjoyments of ſenſe were conſidered as ſo much at war with intellectual excellence, that every individual and all bodies of men who affected to attain any ſublime degree of virtue, particularly of the religious kind, were exemplary for the auſterity of their diſcipline. The magi among the Perſians, and the bramins among the Gentoos, maintained by the mortifications they impoſed on themſelves, as well as by the ſanctity of their manners, that influence over the minds of the people which eſtabliſhed their authority. And Plato, the prince of philoſophers, as he uſed to be termed, aſſerts, that a total abſtraction from all the objects of ſenſe, is the only way to ſtudy the divine Nature with ſucceſs.

The alteration which the Chriſtian æra made in the ancient ſyſtems of theology, produced no alteration of opinion reſpecting the conſtitution of the human frame, and as the Chriſtian religion ſat before the mind a brighter proſpect of futurity, it rendered man more negligent of preſent enjoyment, and more intent on preſerving that purity of ſoul which was to be rewarded with an endleſs ſtate of happineſs.

On this view of things the Chriſtian churches, of all denominations in a greater or a leſs degree,

encouraged modes of mortification and abſtinence as uſeful to piety, and as particularly neceſſary in a ſtate of penitence. It was this view of things which gave birth to thoſe rigorous examples that the firſt ages of Chriſtianity ſat forth; examples which, whilſt they lead us to lament the impotence of human judgment, fill us with admiration of thoſe aſtoniſhing powers which could carry men through ſuch tedious periods of voluntary miſery. Time, the corrector of all extravagant enthuſiaſm, has made ſo great an alteration on general opinion and practice, that an excluſion from the pleaſures of life is not even in thoſe ſocieties where the catholic faith prevails, generally regarded as the only ſure way of attaining the joys of paradiſe; and princes have thought it a juſtifiable policy to diſcourage the entering into recluſe ſocieties, as a practice injurious to the public, and which in many inſtances has been abuſed to the prejudice of individuals.

The opinion of a mutual hoſtility exiſting between the two ſubſtances of ſoul and body, which univerſally prevailed among our anceſtors, has been like all other eſtabliſhed opinions, received with a degree of ſcepticiſm by their poſterity. A more friendly union than ancient doctrines ſet forth, has been thought to ſubſiſt between the mental and the carnal part; and ſome modern philoſophers have gone ſo far as to maintain

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that man is made of one ſubſtance only. Without entering into the ſubtle arguments and the nice refinements of theſe deep metaphyſicians, let us, Hortenſia, take the unerring rule of experience in our examination into the nature of man, and we ſhall find, that in our wideſt deviations from the dictates of reaſon, the mind is often more in fault than the body; and that it is the ſtrong motions of the mind which direct the courſe of bodily activity, and give ſtrength and often birth to the incentives of appetite.

It is true, that the mind receives all its intelligence through the organs of ſenſe, and were it deprived of their aſſiſtance, it would be incapable of ſentiment, and conſequently of giving birth to any idea. But in the contempt with which the ſevere moraliſt regards the ſenſual part of man, he does not take into conſideration, that the moſt ſublime ideas we are capable of forming owe their origin to the impreſſions of ſenſe; and that as all the virtuous as well as the vicious affections flow from theſe ſources of intelligence, it may be found on a clear view of the ſubject, that a refinement in the ſenſual gratifications is neceſſary to the refinement of ſentiment.

The word luxury, as it is uſed by all writers, conveys no poſitive idea to the mind. It is applied to different objects by different individuals,

as judgment or prejudice prevails; it is commonly uſed in the language of cenſure; but if we make any accurate definition of this term, we ſhall find that it takes in every ſuperfluous expence, and every kind or degree of gratification which is not neceſſary to the mere ſupport of exiſtence. Theſe articles are ſo few in number, that they have been exceeded by men in every age of the world and in every ſtate of ſociety. But as I would extend the preſent queſtion to the ſubjects of bodily health and mental excellence, I ſhall endeavour to find out how far the enjoyments of ſenſe may be made to agree with the dictates of reaſon; of what kind are thoſe luxuries which are incompatible with the good of ſociety; and what are thoſe indulgences which on motives of ſound policy may be allowed and encouraged by government.

The various modes of cleanlineſs, as they are practiſed by the Engliſh, are attended with ſuch a conſiderable expence, that on theſe reaſons there are few of them adopted by our œconomical neighbours on the continent. Thus it appears by experience, that filth is not inimical to life; yet cleanly habits are neceſſary to the well being of the body. They promote an innocent activity, they afford employment in the idleſt ſituations of life, and they have a tendency to correct the morals of mankind, by inducing a delicacy of ſentiment; and by a kind of analogy which appears

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to exiſt between the rectitude and the gracefulneſs of actions.

Whether the eaſtern nations only attended to the health and well being of the body, or whether they extended their views to moral conſiderations, it is certain that their religious cuſtoms and diſcipline ſtrongly enforce habits of perſonal cleanlineſs. And the uſe of bathing was ſo general among the civilized nations in the ancient world, that under the Emperors baths were maintained at Rome at the expence of the government; they were open to all ranks of people on very moderate terms; and paupers had the liberty of uſing them free of all coſt.

The revival of ſuch a benevolent eſtabliſhment would be attended with very ſalutary effects both on the mind and body. But it is not only habits of perſonal cleanlineſs which nations ſhould be zealous of adopting who pretend to any high degree of civilization, or who are ambitious of attaining it; cleanlineſs in every poſſible mode, is a luxury which ought to meet with all the encouragement which example and power can give: for we may find among the inhabitants of a neat cottage, ſentiments which would grace the exalted ranks of life; but never did the filthy hovel ſend forth a civilized citizen. Uniform experience on this ſubject, has produced in all minds ſo uniform an aſſociation of ideas, that dirt and rags are beheld

held with a kind of terror by thoſe who are not accuſtomed to ſcenes of wretchedneſs, and are never able to obtain that confidence which is given to objects who carry a contrary appearance.

The deſire of exciting admiration by perſonal charms, Hortenſia, is an ambition, which in all ſituations of ſocial life, will be found prevalent in the human character. The American hunter, the Eaſtern deſpot, and the European beau, are equally fond of heightening by art and ornament, the natural graces of perſon; and as the ſtandard of beauty varies according to the different prejudices of different ſocieties, modes of embelliſhment muſt conſequently vary. But in thoſe ſocieties where the laws of property are eſtabliſhed, the vanity of excelling in perſonal charms is commonly united to the vanity of excelling in coſtly apparel. A vanity which has ever been found ſo prevalent in civilized ſocieties, that governors themſelves, inſtead of ſetting the example of a reaſonable ſobriety, have led the way in all the extravagancies of dreſs; and even where the leaders of the people have ſeriouſly endeavoured to put a ſtop to the growth of this luxury, they have commonly been foiled in the attempt.

According to our ideas of beauty, we certainly find that the beauty of the human perſon is more capable of being heightened by exterior ornament, than that of the other animals. This, you will ſay,

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muſt either be a defect in the natural beauty of the human form, or a defect in our judgment; but it is certain, that when the human form is totally neglected, it ſoon looſes the appearance of beauty. Even an anxious attention on the article of perſonal figure, when contraſted with an utter contempt for grace and harmony, may be a foible on the right ſide; as ſlovenly habits will be found more at war with the refinement of human ſentiment, than foppery itſelf. But though much ſophiſm has been uſed to prove that the luxury of dreſs in its moſt extravagant height is advantageous to ſociety, yet a wiſe government will do well to correct its exceſs. The waſte of time it occaſions, muſt needs impede human improvement; and the refinements of art, in this caſe, tend to miſlead human ſentiment on the nature of that excellence which is the moſt reſpectable in a rational being.

Flowing garments ſuit not with the offices of labour; but were a mode of dreſs for feſtivals to be adopted which, though graceful, required little time to adjuſt, it might ſerve to generalize taſte, and conſequently to refine ſentiment. Were the leaders of the people by their example to reſtrain the idleneſs of fancy, and give ſtability to faſhion, the ſhameful waſte of time and money, which at preſent prevails in moſt European ſocieties, would be ſaved. The inventive faculties, which are

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now preſſed into the ſervice of milliners and hair dreſſers, would be better employed; and the motley ſhew which ſociety at preſent ſets forth, would give place to a gravity and a dignity of appearance more conformable to the high ideas we have conceived of rational nature.

When the term civilized, Hortenſia, is oppoſed to the term ſavage, a refinement in morals is commonly underſtood; but the general ſenſe of the word civilization, as it is uſed by modern authors, conveys no other idea than a refinement in the enjoyments of ſenſe. Therefore, when I ſpeak of any higher degree of civilization which one modern ſociety has attained over the other, I would be underſtood to imply no other meaning than what is annexed to the loweſt ſenſe of this word. A ſuperior refinement in the enjoyments of ſenſe, includes a ſuperior knowledge in the excellencies of objects as they relate to ſenſe; and is denominated taſte. When taſte is become prevalent, the arts will be encouraged, and conſequently improved. Eating, from the neceſſary repetition of this enjoyment, forces itſelf on the attention of mankind. On the ſupply of our food, depends the ſupply of our ſpirits; and on theſe the enjoyments of ſocial converſe. Convivial meetings, on this account, form the moſt rational part of pleaſurable life, and have been practiſed by every nation in every ſtage of ſociety; conſequently

quently the art of cookery has maintained its importance among the luxuries of all civilized nations. To the ſatisfaction of feeding on delicious fare, is united the vanity of vying and excelling in thoſe kind of expences which can be only enjoyed by the opulent. Hence the oſtentation of the table, grows with the riches of the citizens. The waſte of animal life at one of the private entertainments of Lucullus, would have been ſufficient to have fed the families of the whole Roman ſenate at the early period of that republic. Thus the art of cookery, from being held in low eſteem at Rome, grew into conſequence; it was ſtudied as a ſcience, and regarded as a ſubject worthy the pen of a Roman ſenator.

The luxuries of the table are among thoſe refinements of ſenſe which are only miſchievous in their exceſs; for the various fruits of the earth, when uſed with moderation, are agreeable to health. The expences of the rich on theſe articles encourage the induſtry of the poor; and the pleaſing cares which attend their cultivation, often afford to the opulent an employment for thoſe hours which would be otherwiſe ſpent in idleneſs or debauchery. The practice of cookery, which is an art of adding flavour by the means of fire to the natural taſte of viands, and of pleaſing the palate by judicious mixtures, affords a large field for the exertion of the inventive faculties,

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and may be found to operate with other innocent refinements of ſenſe, to the improving the ſenſibility of the mind; for the barbarous cuſtoms of the Tartars, and other uncivilized nations, of eating raw fleſh muſt tend to make man a more carniverous animal than he would be, if his taſte in eating was more refined. Groſs animal food gives a rough tone to the paſſions; and the man who can without repugnance ſwallow blood in its natural ſtate, will hardly be moved with ſympathy at the ſight of one of thoſe bleeding victims whom a general and long cuſtom has rendered neceſſary to our ſuſtenance. Thus the luxuries of the table may, in ſome ſenſe of the term, be found favourable even to moral civilization; but when with a cruel indifference to the waſte of animal life, our boards are ſpread with thouſands of ſuperfluous victims, the miſchievous oſtentation becomes an object of ſerious attention; and on the principles both of humanity and good policy cannot be too much diſcountenanced by the example and power of government.

LETTER

LETTER XI.

Gardening—Architecture—Domeſtics—Drama.

Hail to the art that teaches wealth and pride
How to poſſeſs their wiſh, the world's applauſe,
Unmixt with blame! that bids magnificence
Abate its meteor glare, and learn to ſhine
Benevolently mild.

MASON.

AMONG thoſe luxuries, Hortenſia, which bid the faireſt for refining and improving the human mind, is the pleaſing art of ornamenting nature by a judicious arrangement of its rich productions.

The face of beauty which the iſland of Great Britain now wears, is principally owing to the taſte of the celebrated Kent and Browne. The firſt ventured to take nature for his guide, in his laying out the pleaſure grounds of the opulent; and the ſecond walking in the ſame tract, has carried fancy and judgment to the higheſt poſſible pitch. When the high unſocial wall gave place to the ſunk fence, the public were admitted to ſhare in the benefits of private wealth. How rich, how gay, how pictureſque, ſays Mr. Walpole, every journey is made through a ſucceſſion of pictures; and

and even where taſte is wanting in the ſpot improved, the general view is embelliſhed by variety. If no relapſe to barbariſm, formality, and ſeclufion is made, what landſcapes will dignify every quarter of our iſland, when the daily plantations that are making have attained venerable ſecurity? I ſincerely wiſh that Mr. Walpole's prophecy may be completely fulfilled; for nothing more tends to chace away that melancholy enthuſiaſm which is always attendant on the ſerious paſſions, than the beautiful face of nature in a pleaſing dreſs. If a whole country was ornamented to the higheſt point of perfection which art can attain, it might operate, with other correſponding circumſtances, to bring into being that golden age which never did yet exiſt but in the dreams of the poets.

The beautifying a country, however, in a manner ſo general, as to meet my idea, can never alone be effected by the opulent, but muſt follow the univerſal diffuſion of taſte. The farmer muſt lay out his lands under the direction of its influence; and the cottager muſt amuſe a leiſure hour in adorning the plat before his little cot. Nor can it be reconciled to experience, that ſo general an activity ſhould be produced, without the operation of that motive which commands the ſervices of all mankind. But the example and encouragement of the great, has an irreſiſtable influence on the poor; and the general commu-

nication of a pleaſing idea, may produce a general ſentiment. Did an opulent inhabitant encourage the riſing taſte of his humble neighbour, by aſſiſting him with his advice in the laying out his grounds, and with the proper ſeeds and plants for beautifying them, it might help to excite that emulation on which all perfection depends. Yet candor obliges me to acknowledge to you, Hortenſia, that ſuch an uniformity in the inclinations of a whole people, as ſhall produce ſo general an effect, may with propriety be conſidered as one of the dreams of the author; but this is at leaſt probable, that luxuries of this kind are not only innocent, but beneficial, and are become worthy the attention and the encouragement of the great.

Architecture, my friend, or the art of building, according to ſome ſtandard of taſte, has taken place in all ſocieties where commerce and riches have afforded the means for expenſive gratification. A large manſion, richly ornamented, is, from the grandeur of its appearance, adapted to ſooth the pride of a lordly owner. The pleaſures of poſſeſſion are encreaſed by the conſciouſneſs, that we are enjoying what the bulk of mankind are from circumſtances leſs fortunate, denied; and the reſpect that riches meet with, incline men to affect ſuch appearances as are calculated to convey to the ſpectator the idea of their opulence.

Theſe motives will be found to operate ſtrongly on the human mind; but there are other cauſes, which in ancient times favoured the art of building. The want of that communication which now exiſts between ſocieties, reſtrained to narrow limits the operation of fancy. The variety of ways in which taſte is employed, and magnificence exhibited by the moderns, had no exiſtence in the earlier times of ſociety. Hence thoſe individuals of the Ptolemy race, who were haunted with the demon of ambition, were guilty of tyranny in order to cumber the ground with vaſt piles of buildings, on the oſtentatious view of leaving to poſterity monuments of their power and magnificence. The ſtate of hoſtility which prevailed in Europe on the overthrow of the Roman empire, from the ſubdiviſion of power which took place among the Gothic invaders, rendered extenſive buildings neceſſary for the ſecurity of each petty tyrant, againſt the attacks of a foreign enemy, or an hoſtile neighbour. But now, the neceſſity of the moated caſtle no longer exiſts; and the expoſed ſituation of our habitations, our fields, and our vineyards, manifeſts the bleſſings of peace, and the empire of law. Now, when from the altered ſtile of our manners, the hoſpitable manſion no longer harbours the dowagers, and all the younger branches of a great family, it might be agreeable to true taſte, and good policy, to preſcribe a leſſer

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ſcale of magnificence in the buildings of private individuals. There is no appearance which ſhocks a candid mind more, than the views of a little hovel contraſted with a princely palace. It betrays an inequality of property, which is incompatible with a wiſe and juſt government; and as envy and covetouſneſs are two paſſions which act powerfully on the peace and harmony of the mind, the virtue of citizens will be in a greater ſecurity where the wholeſome reſtraint of ſumptuary laws, or taxes properly impoſed, baniſh thoſe objects from ſociety, which are adapted to inflame cupidity, and excite a vicious emulation.

The keeping large trains of uſeleſs ſervants, may be ranked among thoſe luxuries which have a greater tendency to vitiate, than to mend the morals of ſociety. Except the vice of gaming, there is no expence which militates ſo highly againſt the principles of a prudent œconomy. The waſte of private fortune, turns the prodigal dupe into the needy knave; and thus lets looſe on the public a number of rapacious adventurers, who have ſufficient influence by the weight of family connection, to repay themſelves with the pillage of the people.

The want of attention in the great to that order and harmony on which the good government of a family depends, and the bad examples which they too frequently ſet to their dependants, never fail

fail to introduce licentiouſneſs among them; and though each individual in the claſs of ſervants may be regarded as inſignificant, yet in a large aggregate they will be found very deſtructive to the purity of public manners, and the good order of ſociety.

Sir Thomas Moore, among ſeveral excellent obſervations on the imperfections of the times, ranks the numerous attendants on the great, as a prolific ſource of public diſorder.

And the Genevans, whilſt they preſerved their liberty and their virtue, were ſo ſenſible of this truth, that they reſtrained themſelves by a ſumptuary law from being attended by any male ſervant during their reſidence in the city.

Among thoſe diſſipated occupations, Hortenſia, which go under the name of public amuſements, the exhibitions of the drama, from the beauty of the ſcenery, and the imitative powers of man, are peculiarly adapted to attract the attention and engage the affections of ſpectators. So ſucceſsful have been the joint efforts of poets and actors in their repreſentation of the paſſions, and the ſorrows and felicities which attend on human life, that they have drawn the ſympathetic tear from tyranny itſelf.

One of the tyrants of Syracuſe would weep at the fictitious repreſentation of ſorrows, ſimilar to thoſe he had himſelf inflicted on his ſubjects. This, and other inſtances of the ſame kind, have led

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ſome moraliſts to rank ſuch exhibitions among thoſe luxuries which are calculated to ſoften the ferociouſneſs of nature, and to mould the human character into a more engaging form. It is true, that the exhibitions of the drama have never been carried to any perfection, but among thoſe ſocieties which we call civilized. Savage life affords neither the leiſure, the encouragement, nor the variety of images neceſſary to any degree of excellence in theſe repreſentations; but it is very doubtful, whether, as they have been hitherto conducted, they have had any great tendency to improve the human character.

The Athenian virtue was certainly not at the higheſt, when the paſſionate fondneſs of the people for ſuch repreſentations led them to determine, that the money ſet apart for the expences of the theatre, ſhould not be diverted for the ſupply of the exigencies of the ſtate *. The hiſtory which records the weeping of the tyrant of Syracuſe, records no inſtances of the reformation of this prince; and among the numerous weeping audiences of the celebrated Mrs. Siddons, perhaps there is not one to be found who would drop a tear at the ſpectacle of real wretchedneſs, provided the object was totally unconnected with their in-

* Among the extraordinary taxes to which the laſt fatal war gave birth, there were none oppoſed with ſucceſs, except that which was attempted to be laid on the exhibitions of the drama.

tereſt. The deſign of the poet in the conduct of theſe pieces is rather to pleaſe than to reform; many of them evidently lead to debauch the mind, and we are told by a profeſſed critic *, that ſome attractive qualities ought to be given to a vicious character in diſtreſs, and ſome tincture of weakneſs mixed with the virtues of a good one, in order to engage the affection and excite the ſympathy of the audience.

What good rules for the conduct of life do even the moſt moral pieces ſet forth? they are commonly replete with ſentiments which war with the uſeful dictates of philoſophy, and would not pleaſe at all, if they were not calculated to inflame thoſe propenſities which, though neceſſary in their conſequences, are in their exceſs the moſt oppoſed to the peace and happineſs of the ſpecies.

The gay ſcenes of life, are ſo inimical to that ſerious turn of mind and ſobriety of thought which religious contemplation requires, that dramatic performances have ever been under the cenſure of the eccleſiaſtical power. In moſt European ſocieties, actors are yet denied Chriſtian burial; and till the licentious age of Charles the Second, it was regarded as incompatible with the modeſty of the female character to appear on a public ſtage. Manners change with times, and opinions

* Doctor Samuel Johnſon.

with

with manners. Our women make no ſcruple to appear as candidates for the emoluments and popularity, which in modern times attend this profeſſion; but ſo much yet remains of old prejudices, as when oppoſed to the prevailing paſſion for the drama, occaſions ſome of thoſe glaring inconſiſtences in human ſentiment, which ſets man in a very ridiculous light, and which puzzles the moraliſt in his diſcriminations on human conduct. The profeſſion of an actor is yet held ſo degrading, that let the talents for ſhining in this line be ever ſo promiſing, no perſon of family can mend a moderate fortune in this lucrative buſineſs. Yet, ſuch is the fondneſs of the public for their favorite actors, that a ſucceſsful player can command both the money, the attention, and the reſpect of ſociety*.

Thus,

* It is recorded among many other extraordinary traits of modern Engliſh hiſtory, that when the houſe of lords had named an early day for the entering on an important debate on one of the preſſing exigencies of the laſt fatal war, a member ſtood up to move for the poſtponing it till after the benefit of Veſtris, a famous French dancer, who danced with ſuch ſucceſs on the Engliſh ſtage, as to raiſe very conſiderable contributions on the public, and to gain by his agility, the affection and reſpect of all the faſhionable world. The reaſon the member gave for poſtponing the day, was the neceſſity of a full houſe on ſo important a debate, and that all the members would certainly be engaged to attend on Monſieur Veſtris.

A favorite French female dancer, though void of any pretenſion to beauty, frequently lives in a higher ſtile of luxury than

Thus, if our prejudices have any foundation in reaſon, we are beſtowing on the worthleſs every advantage which the higheſt merit can claim; if not, we lay an unjuſt reſtraint on talents and poverty when they are unfortunately united to an elevated ſituation in life, and in ſo doing give a monopoly to thoſe who ſtand in a contrary predicament.

The important rank which dramatic performances have held in the liſt of public amuſements, have occaſioned them to be an object worthy the attention of the literati, ever ſince the art of printing has afforded an eaſy way of communicating private ſentiment to the public ear.

The famous lawyer, Prynne, wrote a thouſand pages to ſhew that ſtage plays ought not to be licenſed in Chriſtian ſocieties: and the elegant Rouſſeau, though no puritan, has taken ſome pains to prove that the faſcinations of the drama muſt neceſſarily produce miſchievous effects in trading towns.

The magiſtrates of Geneva have always found theatrical performances ſo deſtructive to the induſtry of the inhabitants of that city, that whilſt the ancient government continued, they were never

any of the firſt fortunes in the country. And it is ſaid, on the intereſting incident of a ſlight indiſpoſition of one of theſe favorites, her door was crowded with the carriages of all the nobility at Paris, who attended in perſon to enquire after her health.

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licenſed. So little however, do mankind agree in their opinion on things which appear in their nature obvious to attention, that in the midſt of the moſt unfortunate war England ever waged, and on the event of which the intereſt of commerce was particularly involved; where there was one petition from any of the trading towns on the want of ſucceſs which attended the meaſures of government, there were two for the licenſe of a provincial theatre.

The queſtion whether ſtage playing is, in its conſequences, uſeful or miſchievous, has never been ſo clearly determined as to prevent the theatre from being in all governments an object of police; and there are many champions for the ſock and the buſkin, who only contend for their uſe in large capitals, where the idle opulent reſort, whom it is neceſſary to ſupply with amuſements, leſt they ſhould employ their leiſure in occupations more miſchievous to the morals of ſociety.

If this plea has ſuch a foundation in truth, as to juſtify the policy of licenſing and encouraging in large capitals the exhibitions of the drama, it cannot juſtify that total want of attention to the morals of the people, which is too evident in the conduct of moſt governments. Why ſhould not the exhibitions of the drama, and all other public ſhews, be performed at thoſe hours of the day when youth, from a ſenſe of decency, and from motives of

of prudence, would be the leaſt tempted to enter into thoſe ſcenes of licenſe and debauchery, which regularly follow the cloſe of thoſe entertainments. Were ſuch exhibitions only licenſed in a morning, the neceſſary buſineſs of the day would carry home the greater part of the audience, and modeſty would deter thoſe whom habit had not hardened, from falling into the ſnares which indigent profligacy ſet for the unwary.

LETTER

LETTER XII.

Religious Sentiments univerſal among the Ancients.

ACCORDING to all the knowledge we can gain of human ſentiment during the firſt ages of the world, Hortenſia, it appears that a dependance on a being, or on beings, who enjoyed ſuperior powers and properties than are to be found among men, was univerſally acknowledged by the human race. For however the various ſocieties in which the ſpecies were divided, might differ in their opinions on the properties they aſcribed to their idols, the degree, or the nature of the power their faith afforded them, or the ſymbolic figure under which they worſhipped them, it is certain that tradition leaves no traces of any ſociety where the principle of religion had no eſtabliſhment. Contemplation in theſe times directed her attention to the ſtudy of divine ſubjects. No man was thought capable of inſtructing or directing the multitude, who was deficient in ſuch knowledge, or who had not by his piety rendered himſelf a favourite of the gods. The neceſſity of ſuch a ſuppoſed predilection to the obtaining any influence over the opinions of ſociety, proved the

ſource of numerous frauds; which became ſo blended with truth, as to render it difficult if not impoſſible for the candid mind to diſtinguiſh in the preſcribed rules of religious and moral duty, the revealed will of heaven from the reaſon of man.

When philoſophy in her maturer age took upon her to correct thoſe abuſes which intereſt had dictated and ſuperſtition confirmed, ſhe became bewildered in the maze of error; the deeper ſhe carried her reflections, the more grounds ſhe found for doubt. Scepticiſm grew with contemplation, and proceeded to ſuch a length as to bring on in proceſs of time a general unbelief of a governing providence. But atheiſm, though prevalent among the men of education, had not in theſe days infected the lower orders of ſociety; and as ſome ſenſe of religious duty was thought neceſſary to give a ſanction to human laws, the rites and ceremonies of religion, wanted no ſupport which the authority and the example of the magiſtrate could give them. The period of the Chriſtian æra opened a new ſtate of things both in civil and eccleſiaſtical ſyſtems.

The influence which the teachers of Chriſtianity acquired over the minds of their converts, whilſt Chriſtianity was yet a ſect, they preſerved after it became the faith of the rulers of mankind. A circumſtance which produced an entire change in the

the policy and government of Europe; for the honors and the powers of the prieſthood which were before united in the perſon of the civil magiſtrate, were now enjoyed as a diſtinct power by thoſe whom the churches had appointed for the eccleſiaſtical office. The ſuperſtition of the people grew with the aſcendency of the eccleſiaſtics, and the aſcendency of the eccleſiaſtics with the ſuperſtition of the people. That power which was at firſt ſubordinate, became equal, then ſuperior to every other order in the ſtate. The enormity of the abuſes which followed this exaltation of the prieſthood, ſet the reaſoning faculties of man again in motion, and produced a partial reformation in ſeveral Chriſtian ſocieties. Had the church at this time reformed its manners, and adapted its policy to the more enlightened ſtate of men's minds, it might ſoon have recovered the ground it had loſt; but what was at firſt obtained by fraud and policy, was ſupported by violence. Tenets framed on the principle of a human intereſt, were repreſented as divine truths, and coerced on the human mind under the pains and penalties of death in this world, and damnation in the next.

Thus the goſpel of Chriſt, which breathes a ſpirit of univerſal love and benevolence, was rendered an inſtrument of ſavage perſecution; and thus the hiſtory of martyrdom under Chriſtian governments.

governments, furniſhes a longer liſt of victims than were ever ſacrificed at pagan altars. The ſcandal which Chriſtianity ſuſtained from the conduct of its teachers, weakened the faith of many. Sceptical obſervations, or rather hints, were given to the public in the beginning of the ſixteenth century by lord Herbert of Cherbery, an Engliſh nobleman. Theſe were followed as time and occaſion offered, by more open animadverſions on the grounds of the Chriſtian faith. The apprehenſions of the Engliſh clergy were rouſed, but they had too many ene-enemies among the believing Preſbyterians to exert their whole power againſt the enemies of Chriſtianity. The licentious days of Charles the Second were peculiarly inauſpicious to religious and moral ſentiment. The example which the king and his courtiers ſat, was of the moſt unfavorable kind.

The pride and unbounded licenſe of the clergy, gave diſguſt to the ſenſible; the folly which appeared in the enthuſiaſm of the puritans, afforded mirth to the prophane; and the contrariety of opinions on the principles of Chriſtianity, with the rancour which ſubſiſted between the different ſects, perplexed the underſtanding of the reflecting.

The Deiſts, who were men of ſenſe and learning, knew well how to avail themſelves of theſe advantages. They aſſerted, that the ſtrength of

human

human reaſon was ſufficient to diſcover and aſcertain religious truths, and that the tale of a particular revelation, was a cunning cheat on mankind. They pointed out with keenneſs and judgment, thoſe exceptionable parts of the doctrine of the Chriſtian churches, which appear derogatory to the moral attributes of the deity; and in their pretenſion to reſtore the purity of the religion of Nature, they were careful to reconcile the opinions they gave of a providential government, to the ſublimeſt idea which the ſublimeſt mind can form of the character of the Deity.

As the primitive Deiſts avoided the advancing any arguments which warred with the pleaſing proſpect of a future ſtate of exiſtence, and carefully adhered to the principles of the pureſt ancient philoſophy, their doctrine was calculated to captivate all the admirers of ancient learning, and to gain an aſcendency over thoſe candid minds whom the diſtracted ſtate of religious ſentiment had confounded; and who had not ſufficient perſeverance, leiſure, or opportunity, to trace out for themſelves a line of rational faith.

There is a mutability in human ſentiment, Hortenſia, and a paſſion for novel doctrines, which authors of all denominations find their account in gratifying. Whilſt the power of the church was high, the ancient philoſophy, as well as the orthodox religion, was ſupported by the weight of authority.

thority. Ariſttotle, though a prophane writer, was eſteemed as infallible as the Pope himſelf; and Plato was another apoſtle among ſome of the fathers of the church; but among the numerous crowd of literary candidates which the liberty of modern times has produced, ancient philoſophy has had as little quarter as the religion of our forefathers. Lord Bolingbroke ſpeaks of Plato as of a wild enthuſiaſt, and endeavours to ſet in a very ridiculous light his reaſoning on the immortality of the human ſoul.

The turn which this nobleman and other faſhionable writers have given to modern infidelity, equally militates againſt every principle of religion, as againſt every particular mode of faith. A Deity without goodneſs, can be no object of worſhip; and a creature whoſe exiſtence is confined to the ſhort duration of human life, can have no better intereſt to purſue, than to fill it with as much enjoyment as his powers and opportunities will permit.

The Engliſh, from the nature of their government, have enjoyed the freedom of ſpeech and writing, far beyond any European nation. The firſt open attack on Chriſtianity, may be ſaid to have commenced among theſe iſlanders; but the reſtraints which have been laid on the preſs in France, as they prevent fair controverſy, have proved

proved yet more inimical to the intereſts of religion, than the freedom of the Engliſh. A people who once begin to doubt, will pay themſelves in the licenſe of thought, for the reſtraints laid on their external actions. The bold and ſatirical writings of Voltaire have been read with an avidity and an applauſe which has given an atheiſtical turn to the opinions of all the free thinkers on the continent; and as there is no withſtanding the contagion of general ſentiment, there is reaſon to believe that the confuſion of the wildeſt ſcepticiſm will ſucceed the darkneſs which accompanied the blind faith of our anceſtors, and that without the particular interpoſition of Providence, religious principle will ſooner or later be diſcarded from all the ſocieties in chriſtendom.

LETTER XIII.

Hints towards rendering the fine Arts ſubſervient to Religion.

MANKIND, Hortenſia, are ever prone to run into the moſt oppoſite extremes. As we formerly ſurpaſſed the ancients in the zeal with which they followed groſs ſuperſtitions, ſo we now out-do them in our contempt for thoſe principles which have more or leſs influenced human conduct from the beginning of time. It is become a very faſhionable ſtile of reaſoning to maintain, that without the aſſiſtance of a foreign principle, human laws are fully ſufficient to preſerve the order of ſociety, and to reſtrain within due bounds the impatient ſelfiſhneſs of man.

Religious ſentiment, it is ſaid, has no grounds either in truth or reaſon; and is rather miſchievous than uſeful in ſociety, becauſe it muſt ever be liable to be abuſed; and alſo, that the affairs of the world will go on much better, when it is entirely diſcarded from human opinion. The advocates for this doctrine find a fruitful ſource of argument in the monſtrous abuſes which have been practiſed on the eaſy faith of man by eccleſiaſtics of

of all denominations. But ſurely the improvement of our reaſon will avail us little, if we are incapable of correcting abuſes which a long experience has enabled us to diſcover. By the ſame means with which we were enabled to take off the maſk from hypocriſy, and to aſſert the freedom of thought and debate, we ſhall be enabled to preſerve the grounds we have gained on the uſurpations of the eccleſiaſtics.

The advantages of printing, by rendering eaſy the communication of ideas, giving an univerſality to their extent, and a permanence to their exiſtence, will be ever found a ſufficient remedy againſt thoſe evils which all ſocieties have experienced from the ſuperſtitions of the weak, and the impoſing craft of the ſubtle. Let us diſmiſs then all thoſe arguments which are grounded on the abuſe of religious ſentiment, and enquire, whether the ſentiment itſelf, when rendered as pure as the diſintereſted reaſon of man is capable of making it, is, or is not, uſeful to the rectitude of morals, and conſequently to the happineſs and good order of ſociety.

That there are a variety of ſituations in which human laws cannot reach the flagitious, or influence the agency of man, is a truth too apparent to be denied by the moſt ſtrenuous advocate for his independence. Temper, habit, taſte, prudence, and timidity, may operate to the main-

tenance of ſobriety of manners in a conſiderable part of the human race: but neither the influence of theſe qualities, nor the influence of philoſophy, can ever be general; and when the religious prejudices men now receive from education are clearly done away from the human mind, the numbers of the profligate will abound, and the virtue of the beſt will be found too cold to ſtand the teſt of a ſtrong temptation. The thoughts of a fatherleſs univerſe, and a ſet of beings let looſe by chance or fate on one another, without other law than power dictates, and opportunity gives a right to exact, chills the ſenſibility of the feeling mind into indifference or deſpair, whilſt they encourage the bold and unfeeling to the perpetration of every act of licentiouſneſs and villainy to which inclination prompts and intereſt dictates.

When we examine the brighter ſide of the queſtion, we ſhall find reaſon to believe that the ſublime idea of holding our exiſtence by the power, and under the ſpecial protection and government, of a being as perfect as the pureſt mind can frame of moral excellence, muſt act towards the reſtraining the violence of libertine inclination, and extend and elevate the virtue of the aſpiring mind.

The delightful ſenſe of the relation we ſtand in, to a being infinitely benevolent and infinitely powerful, is adapted to ſpread the gleam of comfort

ſort on the darkeſt affliction; to correct the ſallies of the wildeſt imagination; and to overcome or alleviate every pain or difficulty which rational nature has to contend with from the beginning to the end of its human courſe. When the world was young in age, mankind had neither the leiſure nor the opportunity to attain even the grounds of that knowledge which has been ſince carried to the ſublimeſt heights of philoſophy. No wonder then that the groſſeſt conceptions ſhould be formed of a God, and that religion ſhould be loaded with ſuperſtitions that tend to corrupt, rather than to correct the vices of the human mind. There are no prejudices ſo ſtrong and ſo inveterate as miſtaken notions conceived of God, and our duty towards him. The honeſt and the ſincere too often make it a point of conſcience to avoid reading thoſe books, and hearing thoſe diſcourſes which tend to weaken what they regard as a ſaving faith. The proud and conceited will not permit themſelves to ſuppoſe that they can have made an erroneous judgment on a point of ſuch importance; and both in religion and politics there will always be found a large party, who either are, or believe themſelves to be, intereſted in ſupporting ancient modes againſt novel innovations.

The maſs of knowledge which is at preſent extant among men, is ſufficiently large to correct almoſt all the errors of ignorance; but how little

of it has been applied to any practical purpoſe of this kind? The diviſion which yet exiſts among the believers in Chriſtianity ſhew, that if the principles of truth are already diſcovered, its votaries are few. How many of us worſhip a God whom we call perfect, and yet aſcribe to him qualities of mind, and modes of conduct, which we condemn when found in our own ſpecies. Errors of ſuch magnitude cannot fail of impeding the progreſs of virtue; and as long as they continue to infect the larger part of ſociety, they cannot fail to prevent mankind from arriving to that high point of civilization which muſt form the perfection of the human character. It is a long time, Hortenſia, before men are perſuaded to throw off eſtabliſhed opinions; but when this is done, the human mind, as if indignant at being ſo groſsly deceived, runs into an oppoſition which is perhaps as much or more exceptionable than the folly it has diſcarded. There is a ſpirit of pride and contention that takes place in the breaſt of the reformer, and his antagoniſt, which occaſion them to purſue thoſe extremes in which it is impoſſible they ſhould meet.

The great abuſe the church of Rome made of a ſucceſsful ſyſtem of policy, with the corruptions they admitted into their doctrine, were objects of a juſt indignation, and called loudly for reformation. The merit was conſequently great of thoſe who

who ventured to ſtem the torrent of her power when at the higheſt; and to lead men at the utmoſt peril of their lives, out of thoſe paths of error, which in their opinion moſt eſſentially affected their preſent and future intereſt. But had not the heat of controverſy, and the zeal which accompanies religious enthuſiaſm, deſtroyed the candor of philoſophic judgment in the minds of the doctors of the reformed church, they would have perceived that a worſhip abſtracted from every object of ſenſe, is little calculated to ſupport religious ſentiment in ſuch a creature as man; and that the human imagination, if kept in a heat proper to nouriſh and ſuſtain abſtracted devotion, muſt be liable to run into the wildeſt enthuſiaſm.

In the dictating to the Iſraelites the ſplendid ceremonies of their worſhip, the wiſdom of God condeſcended to accommodate itſelf to the weakneſs of man. And had not the clergy of the Romiſh church adopted the policy of the pagans, in keeping the minds of their votaries amuſed with a variety of ſenſible objects, they would never have been able, on mere opinion, to have eſtabliſhed and ſuſtained a power more extenſive and more enormous than ever was accompliſhed by the means of force.

It is undoubtedly lawful to make uſe of the policy of the crafty, to otain ends which may be univerſally beneficial. That influence over ſen-

timent, which the church of Rome uſed for laying the foundations of a partial intereſt; let the philoſophic legiſlator endeavour to acquire, for the producing a general good. Religion, if properly adapted to the feelings of the mind, will be found a powerful engine in the great work of human civilization; but in order to render it ſuch, the articles of its faith muſt be clear of every myſtery which is contrary to rational belief, and purged of every corruption which is repugnant to human ideas of rectitude. When the foundation of juſt judgment is thus laid in the mind by eſtabliſhing clear ideas on the nature of moral perfection, it will be no difficult matter to enliſt the imagination in the cauſe of virtue, by giving it ſuch food for its amuſement and delight, as ſhall be adapted to preſerve and cheriſh ſublime ſentiments.

The fine arts, which conſiſt in the power of moulding and arranging ſenſible objects in ſuch a manner as to ſooth, pleaſe, and delight the imagination, have been found, when left to the direction of private judgment, rather ſubverſive of human virtue, than the promoters of it. The patriotic ſpirit of Phocion, was moved to ſuch a degree of impatience at the corruptions they had introduced among the Athenians, that he wiſhed his countrymen had never known the uſe of a chiſſel.

The profligate rapacity of the Roman Verres,

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is known to every common reader, nor are modern times deficient in ſuch examples as may ſhew to the attentive obſerver, that the eager deſire of poſſeſſing what is rare and beautiful of the objects of art, has totally extinguiſhed among many of us the virtues of moderation, liberality, and even juſtice itſelf. The arts of painting and ſtatuary, as they are at preſent exerciſed, ſerve more to inflame appetite, than to inſpire noble ſentiments; and muſic, which is capable of producing the moſt oppoſite effects on the mind, either of exalting the paſſions or of ſoothing their turbulence, how ſeldom is it uſed to harmonize the ſoul when ruffled into a dangerous commotion, or conducted in ſuch a manner as may tend to heighten the vigor of its laudable affections.

The admirers of the arts have truth on their ſide, when they aſſert that they are both the ſymptoms, and the cauſe of civilization. For in thoſe ſtates of ſociety where riches afford leiſure and encouragement to genius to exert her powers on the ſubjects of art, the arts will ever be practiſed. And the ſtudy, the practice, and a taſte for the arts, will improve the ſenſibility, and conſequently the delicacy of the human mind, on which all refinement depends. If theſe poſitions have no grounds in truth, Hortenſia, we ſhall do well to diſcourage our idle citizens, who tempt us from the rules of prudence with their expenſive trifles; but if the

contrary appear to be the caſe, we ſhould be cautious in the uſe of ſuch luxuries, by which virtue may be corrupted as well as improved. For if the arts have a power of ſoftening and encreaſing the delicacy of the human mind, they muſt have the power of engraving on it miſchievous as well as uſeful impreſſions, and of deluding, as well as pleaſing, the imagination. If the captivating charms of art are capable of encreaſing that delicacy of ſenſation, and that refinement, which is favourable to the ſublimer virtues; let us endeavour to make their influence general, and to take from them the poiſon which lie mingled with their ſweets. Let us cheerfully ſacrifice the uſe of private advantages to the nobler purpoſes of a general good, and our more particular pleaſures to the furthering the benevolent purpoſes of God. Let us content ourſelves with plain and ſimple habitations which, though they may be calculated to afford us every convenience that rational luxury may demand, or the moſt liberal hoſpitality require, yet will not be in a ſtile to pamper a ſelfiſh pride in our own breaſts, or to inflame with envy or cupidity the weak mind of our neighbour.

Let us find employment for the genius of our architects, in making our churches as magnificent and as beautiful as the power of art can make them. Let us enliſt the tribe of painters in the ſervice of virtue,

virtue, by employing them in painting ſuch moral and religious ſubjects, as are the beſt adapted to make ſublime and uſeful impreſſions on the mind. Let us adorn the inſide of our churches with theſe repreſentations. Let the art of ſtatuary be devoted to the ſame ſervice. Let the muſicians tune their inſtruments to ſuch lays, as are alone calculated to raiſe the ſoul to high contemplation, and to inſpire moral and religious ſentiment; and laſtly, by a ſtrict coercive law, let theſe arts be rendered ſacred to the ſervice of God.

To prevent any ſuch miſchievous ſuperſtitions as have ariſen in former times from modes of worſhip, perhaps eſtabliſhed with intentions equally innocent and laudable; the people ſhould be carefully inſtructed in philoſophical opinions on the nature of the deity; and conſequently that honor to him cannot be intended by ſuch regulations. They ſhould be honeſtly let into the whole ſecret, and told, that they are made uſe of as practical means to attract, and to draw people by the innocent pleaſures of ſenſe, into a willing and frequent repetition of acts of public devotion; and to ſerve as means to fix the mind on thoſe ſubjects on which it ought moſt eſpecially to meditate whilſt employed in the worſhip of the deity, and in receiving public inſtruction on the principles of religious duty.

Your penetration will long before this, have enabled

enabled you to perceive, Hortenſia, that my view in rendering ſacred to devotion the higheſt luxuries of art, is to deprive the public of thoſe diſſipating pleaſures, which ſerve to diſtract, to miſlead, and to corrupt; and to unite if poſſible its higheſt ſenſible enjoyments, with the ſublimeſt of the intellectual kind. Nor are theſe all the advantages which appear likely to attend ſuch a uſe of the works of art; for whilſt, according to this plan, they ſerve the benevolent purpoſe of giving to the indigent a taſte of thoſe refined enjoyments, they open a door of civilization to the meaneſt ranks of the people; they render the worſhip of a benevolent deity the moſt delightful taſk we can purſue; and according to the example which Nature has ſet, they enable us to acquire by the means of ſenſible objects, ideas of the moſt intellectual kind.

On theſe and a variety of ſuch conſiderations, the building of the churches ſhould be conducted in a ſtile the beſt adapted to give pleaſing and cheerful images to the mind. They ſhould be kept well aired both in ſummer and winter; and in the rigorous ſeaſon of the year they ſhould be warmed with fire. Their ornaments ſhould be extended to all thoſe inferior works of art, which make up a material part of the luxuries of the opulent; and they ſhould be open twice a week to all who deſire admittance, excepting to thoſe whoſe appear-

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ance indicates a contempt for induſtry, cleanlineſs, and decency.

The ſeats allotted for the worſhippers ſhould be according to an exact rule of parity. No private decorations, no diſtinctions ſhould be allowed to foſter pride and ſervility, or to deſtroy for a moment the idea of that equality which ought to be felt whilſt we are worſhipping our common Father; and to avoid that confuſion of ideas, which the flattery of the courtier, and the folly of the bigot, is adapted to raiſe in the vulgar mind, every diſcouragement ſhould be given to the uſe of any geſtures or proteſtations in the ſervice of religion, which have taken place in the intercourſe of men.

Though you ſhould favour ſome of theſe hints with your approbation, Hortenſia, you may poſſibly object to the excluſion of any worſhipper, and to the limiting the time of divine ſervice to twice a week. I muſt acknowledge that theſe objections appear to be too well grounded in reaſon to be diſregarded; but as cleanlineſs is a very material part of civilization, and the total want of ſuch delicacy deſtructive to ſentiment; there can be no tyranny or injuſtice in adopting in ſo moderate a manner, that part of the religious policy of the Jews which reſpect the cleanlineſs of the people.

On the objection which you may make to the limiting the ſervice of the church to two days in the week;

week; I muſt obſerve, that to ofrequent a repetition of what is calculated to exalt the higher paſſions of the ſoul, will either fail of the intended purpoſe, by weakening the ſtrength of their influence, or in minds congenial to ſuch exaltations, they will be apt to raiſe an enthuſiaſm unfavourable to the temper of true philoſophy, and conſequently to true religion.

As the virtue of the people muſt depend on the nature of the inſtructions they receive, and as the charms of oratory have a captivating power over the mind; governors, when they have thus arranged all the leſſer matters neceſſary for the celebration of public worſhip, will do well to engage the beſt orators for the employment of teaching and reading.

The ſervice of the church ſhould be compoſed of ſhort prayers, well adapted to expreſs the ſenſe of our dependance on the divine being, our ſubmiſſion to his will, and our confidence in his wiſdom. They ſhould be ſhort, and without repetition; and every now and then interrupted by hymns, which ſhould chaunt the praiſes of God in his moral character, and particularly his benevolence to all his creatures.

On the inſtructions to the people, government would do well to preſcribe the following rules: That all myſteries of faith, and ſuch metaphyſical arguments as are diſputable, be carefully avoided

by the preachers. That they ſhould enter largely, and dwell particularly, on the practical doctrines of the Chriſtian religion. That they ſhould repreſent man as a creature endued with powers capable of meliorating his own natural ſituation, and that of the greater part of the brute creation. They ſhould inſiſt that the powers of human reaſon can never be ſo properly employed, as when they are enlarging the boundaries of good, and narrowing the empire of evil. They ſhould repreſent this, as the great prerogative of man; the only ſervice which can be truly acceptable to a benevolent maſter, and the only labour in the vineyard which can expect to meet with a reward. They ſhould paint in ſtrong and lively deſcription, the golden age of man as related by the poets, and the paradiſaical ſtate of the world, as related by the divines; and ſhould then endeavour to ſhew that the art and induſtry of man, if united to a liberal and unconfined benevolence, would in a great meaſure realize thoſe happy ſcenes. And that ſuch duties, if ſeaſoned with a proper ſpirit of piety, would be truly ſetting Chriſt on his throne by effectually ſeconding the benevolent purpoſes of his miſſion. That they ſhould end theſe, and ſuch like diſcourſes, with a prayer that God would incline the heart of his creature man, to fulfil to the utmoſt of his power the benevolent purpoſes for which he has been ſo largely endowed beyond the reſt of the

the animal creation; and then finiſh the ſervice with a hymn, in which the goodneſs of the Father of the univerſe ſhould be loudly celebrated*.

In order, Hortenſia, to impreſs the more ſtrongly on the people's minds the ſuperiority of benevolence, to that of any other virtue; No ſtatue, buſt, or monument, ſhould be permitted a place in the church, but of thoſe citizens who have been eſpecially uſeful in the mitigating the woes attendant on animal life; or who have been the authors of any invention, by which the happineſs of man, or brute, may be rationally improved.

* In the celebration of this laſt hymn, there ought to be greater variety, and a greater number of inſtruments than in the celebration of the other parts of the ſervice.

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LETTERS
ON
EDUCATION.

PART III.

LETTER I.

On the Origin of Evil.

OUR late ſpeculations, Hortenſia, on moral conduct, naturally lead us to a ſubject the moſt important in metaphyſical inquiry, becauſe the moſt intereſting to the hopes and fears of man.

When we behold a ſyſtem of creation replete with beauty and utility, whoſe excellence proclaims it the work of an architect endued with infinite power and benevolence, we conſider it as a paradiſe adapted to the ſupport and the enjoyment of ſenſitive exiſtence. But when we perceive evil overflowing, and univerſally excluding during the courſe of a ſhort life, an uninterrupted ſtate of happineſs, we are ſtruck with the ſurpriſing phe-

nomenon. Hence the cauſe and ſource of moral and natural evil, has been the object of philoſophical reſearch, from the firſt dawn of ſpeculative reaſoning to the preſent day.

How came the beneficent giver of ſo many rich and valuable gifts, to ſuffer mental and bodily diſeaſe? how came he to ſuffer guilt, remorſe, and all the numerous train of evils which accompany ſin and death, thus to deform his works? are queſtions which continually occur, and continually elude the anxious curioſity of the enquirer.

It is known, that the ſages of the eaſt, by a kind of metaphyſical machinery, endeavoured to account for evil by the divided empire of two of the firſt principles in nature: the one a benevolent, and the other a malevolent being, who after a long contention, in which power was ſo equally balanced, as to exclude every hope of victory on either ſide, amicably agreed to the expedient of a united government over the intended creation.

Beſide this ſyſtem of theology, another opinion generally prevailed in the Eaſt, that there were intelligencies of a leſs perfect nature than was that of the ſupreme mind, which had been produced by way of emanation from the great original; and that other intelligences leſs and leſs perfect, had in gradation proceeded from them. That all ſpirits, whether dæmons, or the ſouls of men, were of this divine origin, and that matter itſelf had in this

this intermediate manner derived its exiſtence from the deity.

Theſe opinions gradually ſpread into the weſtern world, whoſe philoſophers endeavoured alſo to account for the ſource of evil on a different ſyſtem: viz. that the production and the government of the world, had been conſigned to the care of deities of ſuch an inferior nature, as to partake of the groſſeſt of human frailties.

It was from this erroneous theology, that human ſacrifices, with ſacrifices of an inferior nature, and all the coſtly pageantry of pagan worſhip, were zealouſly offered to appeaſe and to gain the favor of deities, who had paſſions and appetites to gratify.

The goſpel revelation opened a field of ſpeculation to man, which, by a candid and unprejudiced inveſtigation, might have led him to concluſions of a more ſatisfactory kind than any which had yet been formed on this important ſubject. But ſo ſtrongly did preſent ſufferings, the terror of a remoter deſtiny, and the prejudices ariſing from eſtabliſhed opinions, prevail over the faith of the believer, that among the firſt Chriſtians there were ſome who adhered to the opinion of an evil principle, whoſe powers were ſufficient to ſupport at leaſt a temporary empire of evil. Even the orthodox church admitted an evil principle, though with a power ſubordinate to the decrees of the

Deity. On this hypotheſis, the calamities of the human race are ſuppoſed to flow from the malignant ſpirit of the baniſhed angels, and the fall of the firſt human pair from a ſtate of innocence and happineſs, with the conſequent ſufferings of their poſterity, are aſcribed to the ſucceſsful wiles of Satan the leader of the rebellious crew.

In anſwer to the hypotheſis of two principles, on which the manichean doctrine is grounded, it has been well obſerved, that the ſuppoſition of an abſolute and infinitely evil principle, is an expreſs contradiction; for as this principle oppoſes the infinitely good principle, it alſo muſt be independent and infinite. It muſt be infinite or abſolute in knowledge and power; but the notion of a being infinitely evil, is of one infinitely imperfect. The one of theſe beings then is abſolutely perfect, and conſequently the other, as it is directly the reverſe, muſt be purely the negation of it as darkneſs is to light. Thus the evil principle muſt have knowledge and power in order to make oppoſition to the good one. But as he is directly oppoſite to the good and perfect one, he cannot have theſe attributes; therefore the ſuppoſition of ſuch an exiſtence as this, implies a contradiction.

The ſyſtem of theology which prevailed in the weſtern world is ſo entirely exploded, that any refutation of it would be an uſeleſs digreſſion. In regard to the operation and influence of ſuch an evil

evil principle as is admitted in the Chriſtian ſyſtem, it may be erring on the ſafer ſide, to ſuppoſe that the influence of the paſſions and the luſts of appetite are repreſented by the metaphorical language of ſcripture, under the figure of an evil principle continually at work, to undermine the innocence, and deprave the virtue of mankind. For ſhould we adhere pertinaceouſly to the literal interpretation, we might give room to the ſcoffer to aſk, why an omnipotent and infinitely wiſe being, ſhould permit one order of his creatures to abuſe their ſuperior powers, in enſnaring into the train of perdition other of his creatures of inferior endowments; for this it may be ſaid ſeems to infer a notion more derogatory to abſolute moral perfection, than the manichean ſyſtem; as that ſuppoſes an impotence in power, rather than a deficiency in the benevolence or wiſdom in the good deity.

Theſe different ſolutions of the difficulty ariſing from the phenomena of natural and moral evil, not having been founded on ſuppoſitions ſufficiently probable to appeaſe the anxiety or ſatisfy the curioſity of the inquiſitive mind; new ſolutions have been attempted, and ſeveral publications have appeared, in which this clue of complicated difficulty is pretended to have been fairly unravelled.

Of theſe modern writers, Dr. King ſtands the foremoſt in reputation, and as his opinions have

formed the baſis of that beautiful poem, "The Eſſay on Man," I will attempt to give you an abſtract of them.

As the admiſſion of evil in the creation, appears on a curſory view of the ſubject to war with the moral perfections of the Divine Being, Dr. King ſets out with a denial of that catholic opinion in the creed of the moraliſt, a moral beauty and a moral deformity neceſſarily independent of the will of every being created or uncreated. It is explained by Plato, under the form of everlaſting ideas or moral entities, coeval with eternity, and reſiding in the divine mind, from whence by irradiating rays like the emitting of the ſun beams, they enlighten the underſtanding of all thoſe intellectual beings who, diſregarding the objects of ſenſe, give themſelves up to the contemplation of the Deity. The modern philoſopher, in a lower ſtrain of reaſoning aſſerts, that there is an abſtract fitneſs of things perceived by the mind of God, and ſo interwoven in the nature of contemplative objects as to be traced like abſtract truths, by thoſe faculties of the mind which enable us to compare and perceive the agreement and diſagreement of our ſenſitive and reflex ideas.

Dr. King, after having thus diſcarded every principle in ethics which can war with his hypotheſis, proceeds to eſtabliſh moral good and evil, on the footing of will dependant on the pleaſure of God,

God, and to be read by man through the medium of ſuffering and enjoyment. He then attempts to give an account of thoſe effects of ſecond cauſes, which go under the denomination of evil. This he does by alloting a certain portion of ſpace for the univerſe, which he fills with as great a number of ſuperior natures in ſuch a chain of gradation as a limited ſyſtem can bear. He at length comes to this globe of earth, and to that loweſt link in the chain of intellectual nature, man; whom he ſuppoſes to have been placed at the head of the terreſtial creation, becauſe the place alloted for his exiſtence was not adapted to the enjoyment and ſupport of thoſe higher ranks of beings, who form the chain of the exalted part of gradation.

The giving to this terreſtial globe advantages adapted to the entertainment and ſupport of beings, endued with higher powers, he ſays was not in the plan of providence; becauſe that which is conſtituted beauty, harmony, and perfection by the divine will, conſiſts of this very gradation and ſubordination of the ſeveral parts of the univerſe.

After eſtabliſhing a neceſſity ariſing from the order and frame of the univerſe, the Doctor treats of that natural evil which has furniſhed ſo many ſpecious cavils againſt the power or the goodneſs of God. What is called evil, he ſays, is not real evil, but only ſome want of a greater good, and ought to be termed only a defect. If man is not

ſo perfect, as the conſciouſneſs of his frail nature and the powers of his imagination ſoaring into the regions of intellectual happineſs prompts him to deſire, it is becauſe every place in the univerſe, adapted to the enjoyment and ſupport of more exalted beings, is full. It was benevolent of God to give ſenſitive exiſtence on any terms, becauſe ſenſitive exiſtence in the ſimple ſenſe of the word, is a bleſſing, which indeed may be diminiſhed by its being accompanied with ſuffering, but which, no ſupportable ſufferings can deſtroy, and when ſufferings are inſupportable they neceſſarily put an end to exiſtence.

Now, continues the doctor, God having in the creation of the human ſpecies, beſtowed the benefit of rational exiſtence to as many of his creatures as the limited ſpace of the terreſtial globe could maintain; he willed to beſtow the benefit of ſenſitive exiſtence on animals of an inferior nature; and in giving the bleſſing of ſenſitive exiſtence to thoſe inferior natures, he wiſely provided for the ſupport and aſſiſtance of man. Thus in the divine œconomy, we ſee every part of limited ſpace as full of animated exiſtences as the nature of limitation will admit.

For the evils of pain and natural death which attend on the whole animal Creation, we may find their cauſes in the ſtubborn nature of matter, and thoſe turbulent properties which are neceſſary to

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ſerve the various purpoſes, which the effects of motion and counter motion produce.

As for the violences committed on the brute creation, and all thoſe tremendous and painful modes of diſſolution to which they are expoſed by their intire ſubjection to man, and the uſe made of them for his enjoyment, nouriſhment, and ſupport, this cannot be called an evil; for ſenſitive exiſtence muſt always be a bleſſing, however ſhort its duration, and painful its extinction. The brutes have no reaſon to complain of being made ſacrifices to the uſe of creatures of a ſuperior nature, for every other place in the univerſe being full, they could have had no exiſtence at all, but under the regulation of theſe laws.

LETTER II.

On the unlimited Power of God.

WHEN I gave you, Hortenſia, an abſtract of Dr. King's origin of evil, I did not propoſe to recommend it as a ſpeculation that in any way tended to ſatisfy the doubts of the ſceptic, or confirm the hopes of the believer: on the contrary, I think it inimical to juſt ſentiments of religion, and to a ſound and cheerful philoſophy.

It ſets out with the introducing an uncertainty on the nature of virtue; and by taking away the eſſential and eternal diſcriminations of moral good and evil, of juſt and unjuſt, and reducing theſe to arbitrary productions of the divine will, or rules and modifications of human prudence and ſagacity, it takes away one regular, ſimple, and univerſal rule of action for all intelligent nature.

Thus the hopes of man are weakened, and that proſpect of retribution and ultimate happineſs diminiſhed, which receive their ſtrongeſt ſupport from the immutable nature of juſtice, and a determinate idea of this principle in the divine mind.

The ſecond objection to be made to Dr. King's hypotheſis is, that it is highly derogatory to God, to repreſent him as forming the creation for a kind of fanciful gratification, and ſacrificing to this point

point that moral excellence, which lies in the benevolent conſideration of beſtowing on all ranks of ſenſitive beings, every happineſs of which their nature is capable.

Thirdly, it ſeems to weaken that notion of irreſiſtable power, which forms one of the moſt exalted attributes of the Deity; ſuch a power, as is ſuperior to every obſtacle, but what implies a poſitive contradiction.

One of thoſe writers*, who has taken great advantage of the Doctor's hypotheſis to ſupport his doubts on the ſubject of future rewards and puniſhments, and on thoſe exalted expectations which are founded on the immutable juſtice of God, aſks, whether there could have been ſuch a moral entity as the abſtract notion which we frame of juſtice, if there had been no rational exiſtences created, or if theſe had been endowed with ſuch independent natures as to have had no relation to each other?

This reaſoning is ſpecious, and carries the appearance of being deep; but it is not unanſwerable. If, ſays the great Locke, an idea could have been formed of homicide, the ſame as we have now of it, the idea would have been juſt, though no homicide had ever been committed. In like manner, the nature, complexion, and reality

* Bolingbroke.

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of juſtice and injuſtice, would always have been the ſame, if the Almighty had never brought into exiſtence any rational beings, whoſe mutual relation required the exerciſe and operation of this moral rule; and if the creation of ſuch independent natures, as had no relation to each other, had been in the divine œconomy, this principle of juſtice muſt have operated in ſuch a manner, as to have given its different eſſences to the actions of the Creator. The ſame may be ſaid of benevolence, and its contrary principle, cruelty. The ſame oppoſition would alſo have exiſted in the comely and the uncomely, in propriety and impropriety, and in all thoſe modes of moral differences which take place in the conduct of men, and which particularly reſpect his nature, his circumſtances, and the relative ſituation in which he is placed to the different inhabitants of the terreſtrial globe.

Thus far I have deviated from the ſubject I ſat out with; but to return to the Doctor's hypotheſis. In my opinion, Hortenſia, the queſtion, whether it is more agreeable to infinite benevolence to give that kind of perfection to his creatures, as is neceſſary to their complete happineſs, will admit of a more ſatisfactory anſwer, than that a ſyſtem of gradation is agreeable to that harmony which the divine mind conceived to form the beauty of his plan. God undoubtedly intended

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to beſtow on all his ſenſitive creatures, the greateſt happineſs that their natures are capable of receiving; and the moſt probable reaſon to be aſſigned for ſuch a gradation, becauſe more correſpondent to the ideas of divine wiſdom, is, that a being, produced in the higheſt degree of natural perfection of which a creature is capable, will not enjoy as much happineſs on the whole, as if he was placed in an inferior ſtation at firſt: for by a continual melioration of his ſtate, he becomes capable of experiencing a ſeries of ſatisfactions and new delights, whilſt he is continually approaching nearer and nearer to perfection; and as finites, however multiplied, can never reach infinity, or abſolute perfection, ſo ſome enraptured imaginations have ſet no bounds to the power and goodneſs of God.

According to Dr. King's reaſoning, the qualities of matter are too ſtubborn to admit of its being tempered in ſuch a manner as might correſpond with the happineſs of ſenſitive creation; but if we attentively conſider the œconomy of animal and vegetable creation, it muſt neceſſarily produce a conviction of the unlimited power of God.

On the ſubject of vegetable nature, let the botaniſt ſtand forth and declare the unlimited power, by which the element earth, is endued with properties fitted to nouriſh and give being to

to exiſtences, with a laviſh and almoſt endleſs variety.

If we examine the inſect tribe, what a variety and contrariety do we obſerve in the nature of theſe animals; nay, what a variety and contrariety of qualities do we find in the ſame animal, at different ſtages of its exiſtence. At firſt, the grub, as if it ſought to conceal from the inquiſitive eye of man, and from the ravenous appetite of inimical animals its helpleſs and unſeemly form, hides itſelf in the boſom of that earth from whence it drew its exiſtence. If it eſcapes from all the dangers which threaten its impotent ſtate, it aſſumes a leſs degrading form; and at length benevolent Nature, as if repentant for having played the ſtep-mother in theſe firſt ſtages of the poor inſect's exiſtence, recompences it with the gift of ſuch an inviting beauty, as often becomes the means of its deſtruction. From being confined within the bowels of the earth, it delights itſelf in the regions of light, ſips the moſt luxurious ſweets of vegetable nature, and enjoys with the more noble animals of the winged race the pleaſures of ærial exerciſe.

If we proceed, and take a ſurvey of thoſe more noble animals of the winged race, we ſhall alſo obſerve in the œconomy of their natures, the ſame principles of variety and contrariety. Did not the phenomenon of nature produce an incontro-

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vertible inſtance in the ſwallow ſpecies, would not the ſceptic aſſert, that it was beyond the power of God, and altogether repugnant to the eſtabliſhed and neceſſary laws of nature in animal organization, for a creature to lie in ſuch a ſtate of inſenſibility, as to carry the appearance of a diſſolution of thoſe properties which ſuſtain life, and in this ſtate to be ſupported without food during the dearth and barrenneſs of the winter, and then to be revivified in that returning period of the year, when prolific Nature produces a laviſh plenty for the ſupport of all her children.

To proceed in our ſurvey of that variety in the principles of created exiſtences, which declare the glory and power of God, how various, how complicated, are thoſe inſtinctive œconomies by which all the quadrupeds, the feathered, and the inſect tribes ſuſtain, ſupport, and defend the boon of life, and provide for the neceſſities of their young in the impotent ſtage of their exiſtence. What can be more contrary and oppoſite than the ſtrength of the lion, and the feebleneſs of the hare? What can be more oppoſite than the ſharp ſight of the lynx, and the blindneſs of the mole? Yet ſupple and indulgent nature adapts herſelf as well to the infirmities of the one, as to the higher perfections of the other.

If we attend to the principle of procreation, we may obſerve a limitation almoſt to barenneſs in

ſome of the creatures, whilſt others, who by a more piteous fate, are aſſigned the prey of ſuperior animals, or are rendered ſubordinate to ſome other uſeful purpoſes in the creation, are prolific to a very high degree.

But if we paſs from earth to water, and ſurvey the finny tribe, here a new world of wonders diſcloſes itſelf to the attentive and inquiſitive mind. Here we ſhall find the peculiar ſtructure of animal creation, adapted to an element ſo hoſtile to the earth born race, as to be incompatible with all the principles of their exiſtence. Here we ſhall find Nature diſplaying her powers, as in the children of earth, in an almoſt endleſs variety of different magnitudes, of different ſhapes, and of different powers, as to procreation, and the qualities on which the principles of offenſive and defenſive war are ſuſtained.

The difference between a whale and the ſmalleſt of the finny tribes, is as prodigious as between an elephant and the minuteſt inſect. And the activity of the eel, and the dormant and almoſt inſenſible ſtate of oyſter exiſtence, is as great an oppoſition as the imagination can form; yet are the different organizations and powers of every genus and ſpecies of animal creation, complete in their ſeveral natures, and adapted to ſuſtain all the difficulties to which they are expoſed by the arrangements and modifications of matter.

An attentive ſurvey of theſe various and contrary effects, produced by unlimited power, will convince the judicious mind, that the pain, ſickneſs, and mortality of any of God's creatures, muſt depend on his will; and that the ſame omnipotence exerted in the ſupport of animal exiſtence againſt all the conflict of jarring elements, through any period of given time, might have ſupported it through all eternity. Indeed Dr. King is obliged to allow, that God can alter or ſuſpend the laws of creation, when he inſtances the ſtate of the firſt pair before their fall from innocence and obedience.

Dr. King is not the only modern who denies the abſolute omnipotence of the Deity. Various writers endeavour to account for the eſtabliſhed courſe and order of things, by a limitation of his power. The correct and judicious Lord Shafteſbury gives a very whimſical reaſon for Nature not having beſtowed wings on her favorite, man, viz. that it would ſtarve the brain: for the chief bulk of birds being in their wings, theſe would exhauſt the œconomy of their frames.

If corporal ſtrength, Hortenſia, is not in the nature of things altogether incompatible with the ſupport of the powers of the mind, a large pair of wings might have been nouriſhed with a proportional addition of food, and a ſtronger digeſtive power in the ſtomach, without ſtarving, or in any

manner affecting the powers of the ſuperior parts of organization. But in truth, there are much more weighty reaſons than what can be drawn from the neceſſity of things, to be aſſigned for the parſimony of nature, in ſuch kind of gifts, to man. How would it decreaſe his ſociability, if he was made more independent of his ſpecies by the gift of thoſe advantages beſtowed on the brute creation? How would it extend violence, and enlarge evil, if to the miſchievous ſagacity of man, the ſtrength of the lion was added? What encreaſed ſlaughter of the brute creation, if his power of digeſtion was enlarged? What infinite miſchief might he not be able to compaſs, if the empire of the air was added to the earth and the ſea; and if with a velocity equal to his ſtrength, he could direct his flight to any part of the globe in purſuit of thoſe objects adapted to gratify his appetites? By ſuch an additional privilege, how would his temptations be enlarged, how would his honeſt induſtry be impeded; how could the robber, the murderer, the raviſher, be brought to juſtice; and how tremendous would be the conſequences ariſing from the extent of his powers in the compaſſing plans to ſatisfy the ſtrong paſſions of love, ambition, and revenge?

To that part of Dr. King's obſervations, which reſpect the principle of drawing ſuſtenance and ſupport from the deſtruction of life, and which falls

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ſo heavy on thoſe beings who deſcend in the ſcale of gradation, it muſt be acknowledged, that the difficulties which ariſe on this view of Nature, cannot be removed but by raiſing difficulties equally great. For if we ſhould aſſent to the poſition, that the bleſſings which accompany ſenſitive exiſtence, are ſo great, that the untoward circumſtance of a violent and painful death, with the mental feeling attending that inſtinctive terror which Nature has given for the avoiding evil, are not capable of overbalancing them; yet ſome duration is ſurely neceſſary to render exiſtence a bleſſing. And as young food is pleaſing to the pampered appetite of man, ſome of thoſe creatures live ſo ſhort a time, that they may be ſaid to be born only to die.

There are ſpeculatiſts, who have endeavoured to account for the moral evil of homicide, on the poſition, that ſuch an irregular extermination of being, is neceſſary to prevent the earth from being overſtocked with inhabitants. The philoſopher Heraclitus gave to war the reſpectful title of "Father, and King, and Lord of all things;" and aſſerts, that when Homer prayed that ſtrife be baniſhed from gods and men, he was not aware that he was curſing the generation of all things, becauſe they deduce their riſe out of conteſt and antipathy.

The errors of the ancients are pardonable; but as the moderns pretend to have gone much deeper in the ſtudy of Nature, it is ſurprizing that they

ſhould ſtill perſiſt in their childiſh conceits, though directly contrary to all the experience which may be gained from an attentive examination of that part of the ſyſtem of creation which lies level to human obſervation. If the quick ſucceſſion of generation had been the ultimate end propoſed by omnipotence, it is plain this end might have been obtained without ſuch a ſacrifice of the happineſs, or the virtue of the creature, as ſhould induce violence and bloodſhed. For the natural life of all the animal creation might have been limited to ſuch a duration, as ſhould in exact proportion have ſquared with the rapidity of the deſtined ſucceſſions; and as we find the Deity has made putridity agreeable and wholeſome to ſeveral of the animals, he might have made it ſo to all, and thus the life of the living might have been ſupported by the carcaſes of the dead, without making room for generation by conteſt and antipathy.

As obſervations of this nature equally affect the whole line of animal exiſtence, it muſt be allowed, that this part of the ſyſtem of providential government lies quite out of the depth of human knowledge to comprehend, and muſt ever remain an object of faith and confidence. But if it is permitted to indulge a ſpeculation on this obſcure and dark phenomenon, may we not hope, may we not preſume, that ſome diſtrict in the immenſe expanſe of the univerſe, may be ſet apart for the

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entertainment of the inferior part of animal nature, where they may enjoy a larger portion of the rational faculties, and that a remembrance of their paſt ſuffering and ſtate of degradation may add greatly to their enjoyment, and conſequently encreaſe their gratitude to their Creator.

There not having been any revelation in favor of the inferior part of animal creation, is no argument that ſuch diſpenſations are not in the œconomy of Providence. For a revelation would be uſeleſs to them in their preſent ſituation; and the letting us into the councils of God on this ſubject, might occaſion an interruption in the intended courſe of things.

The attempting to account for the phenomenon in this manner, cannot be attended with the evil conſequences, nor is liable to the objections, which load other ſyſtems and opinions. It may alſo tend to abate the pride, inſolence, and cruelty, which we harbour on the ſubject of theſe inoffenſive partners in our pilgrimage, and help to induce a more Chriſtian ſpirit of general benevolence and univerſal ſympathy.

If the enlarging ſenſitive exiſtence to every poſſible degree of extenſion, had been the predominant principle in the divine plan, independent of any benevolent deſign, all matter might have been endued with ſenſation. The earth might have been a ſenſitive exiſtence, and have

given ſenſitive life to all the vegetable world. The elements, the planets, and every ſuperior and inferior part in the ſtupendous ſyſtem of the univerſe, might have partaken of the gift, which indeed is aſſerted to be ſo general, that the water, the air, and every plant, is ſuppoſed to be full of animated life, though concealed from the human eye by the minuteneſs of form. But this does not militate againſt the preſumption of a ſtate of retribution to the larger animals, who, we have reaſon to think, if we may credit the informations of ſenſe, are expoſed to great miſery in this vale of life. For if ſuch a general ſyſtem of reſurrection, as ſhould take in all animated nature, is not in the deſigns of providence, it may be concluded, that if there are any of the inſect tribes for whom this bleſſing is not intended, they may be formed in ſuch a manner as not to be ſubject to that miſery which bodies, whoſe organization correſpond more with the human ſtructure, muſt, from the eſtabliſhed laws of Nature, be ſubject: and that the diſſolution of the very minute animals is ſo ſuddenly effected, as to admit of no portion of pain; and that the boon of life being unmixed with ſufferings, may, however ſhort its duration, be in this ſenſe eſteemed a bleſſing.

LETTER

LETTER III.

That the injudicious Defenders of Religion have given means of Triumph to the Infidel.

THE divine, and the philoſopher, Hortenſia, in an over anxiety to defend the cauſe of religion againſt the ſceptic, have furniſhed him with the ſtrongeſt arguments which can be urged againſt a ſuperintending providence, and a future ſtate.

If our ideas of moral perfection are only modes of thinking, adapted to our human ſtate, and framed by human intelligence; or, if of divine origin, engrafted by power on the mind of man, how can we found any hopes on what we call the juſtice and benevolence of God? And if there is no portion of moral or natural evil in this world, but what is neceſſary in the nature of things—if exiſtence is to be eſteemed a bleſſing, however burthened with pain and miſery—if the perfect benevolence of God is neceſſarily limited in its effects by an impotence of power—if the advantage of an almoſt infinitely extenſive ſyſtem by the ſacrifice of the ſubordinate component parts, is to be conſidered as the complete fulfilling to the creature, what may rationally be expected from the creator—

creator—then revelation muſt loſe all the ſupport which it draws from the reaſon of things, and muſt ſtand alone on thoſe grounds of uncertainty which attend hiſtorical evidence. It muſt ſtand on that credit, which the variable complexion of faith aſſumes in different characters, and on thoſe different degrees of belief or ſcepticiſm which take their riſe from the accidental circumſtances of life.

It is theſe injudicious defenders of the ways of Providence, who have unintentionally enlarged thoſe narrow limits in which ſcepticiſm has hitherto ranged to an extent which threatens the annihilation of every ſound principle in morals and religion. The unbeliever triumphs in his newly acquired ſtrength, urges the conteſt, and boldly challenges the religious world to fight the battle on the ground which themſelves have marked out. And whilſt he uſes the weapons of the adverſary with a commanding ſucceſs, the anxious believer finds his hopes gradually decreaſe, and the ſublime proſpect of a happy eternity clouding by degrees, till at length it vaniſhes into the chaos of doubt and uncertainty. Of all thoſe who have made the moſt advantage of this modern manner of accounting for the origin of evil, lord Bolingbroke ſtands the foremoſt, and has managed the argument with ſuch ſkill and addreſs, as is ſufficient to impoſe on all thoſe who, for want of literary ſagacity, do not

apply themſelves to trace out all his numerous contradictions.

Lord Bolingbroke's famous work directed to the overthrow of revelation and the hopes of futurity, is grounded on Dr. King's hypotheſis of the origin of evil. With the doctor, his lordſhip perceives no evil in the world, but what is neceſſary, and flowing from thoſe limitations of power which impoſſibilities create. With the doctor, he devoutly explodes the doctrine of an abſtract fitneſs of things, as derogatory to the divine character, and fixes the origin of right and wrong in arbitrary determinations of the divine will. With the doctor, he ſuppoſes that harmony and univerſal good are at war with an extenſive perſonal happineſs; and from theſe premiſes he draws a concluſion, that power, and an independent exiſtence, are the only determinate attributes which can be aſcribed to God.

Having thus far gone amicably on with the divine, he at length leaves him as a man who is fettered by the prejudices of education and profeſſion; and with thoſe engines of diſpute in which they are both agreed, he proceeds to batter down the pile of revelation, till he leaves not one corner ſtone in the building to erect either church or temple.

Lord Bolingbroke having thus piouſly emancipated the Deity from that moral neceſſity which muſt accompany

accompany perfect wiſdom, takes down the pride of man, by aſſerting that he is too inſignificant a part of the creation to demand the protection of a ſpecial providence.

Should you imagine, Hortenſia, that this view of things was of ſo inviting a nature as to attract the admiration of mankind?—yet ſuch is the deſire in man to be ſet free from the rule of right, and the puniſhment of demerit, ſuch is the love of novelty, and ſuch the fantaſtic ambition of embracing doctrines which militate againſt popular opinions, that Bolingbroke's diſciples are a growing ſect. The exalted idea formerly entertained of the lot of man, is generally exploded; and of ſuch a patient nature is modern philoſophy, that we chearfully embrace in the harſheſt ſenſe of the expreſſion, that emphatical curſe contained in the following text, "for duſt thou art, and unto duſt ſhalt thou return."

Every erroneous opinion entertained of the moral attributes of the Deity, the nature of virtue, and the grounds of future expectations, muſt bewilder the judgment, and obſtruct all improvement in the ſcience of morals, and the practice of its rules.

If you will attend to me then, Hortenſia, I will endeavour to ſhew you the inconſiſtencies which abound in the opinions of this noble author, and expoſe thoſe falſe grounds of reaſoning, that he

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uſes againſt the principles of revealed religion, and on which he founds a high probability of the poſitive mortality of man.

The method of reaſoning on abſtract principles, lord Bolingbroke condemns, as having led men into the moſt impious and impertinent concluſions. He recommends, a tracing God upwards by an attention to his works; and after magnifying the power and intelligence of the Deity, by thoſe common obſervations which occur in the contemplation of Nature, he determines that we have no reaſon to believe ſuch a diſplay of power and intelligence is ſubordinate to any benevolent end; for it is downright impiety to form any idea of God's juſtice and benevolence, by thoſe complex notions which we have annexed to ſuch words, when conſidered as human attributes.

It is a misfortune which muſt ever attend an error in firſt principles, that it neceſſarily leads to ſome untoward concluſion, which if maintained in the regular argumentative manner, the teacher will be involved in unavoidable contradiction. Lord Bolingbroke had too much ſagacity, not to apprehend the conſequences which muſt ariſe from an uniform denial of any ſimilarity in the divine attributes, to thoſe ideas which human ſagacity has acquired of the nature and the quality of virtue. In his attempts therefore to reconcile the poſitive mortality of man, with that

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adverſe fortune and miſery which ſometimes attend virtue in this ſtage of exiſtence, and that triumphant ſucceſs which crowns the perverſe and malevolent exertions of the wicked, he abandons the primary principles on which his argument is built, and after the ordinary manner of metaphyſicians, he proceeds to juſtify the ways of God on the principles of human rectitude. After a good many pleaſant and acute obſervations on thoſe reaſoners, who argue that virtue loſes its reward if it is not attended with riches and honor, and all the external advantages of life, he rejects with diſdain the conſiſtent method of ſtoic reaſoning, and reaſſuming the ſpeculations of Doctor King, advances many doubts concerning the reality of human miſery, and the inequalities in regard to pain, pleaſure, joy and vexation, which human experience has allowed to exiſt among the ſons and daughters of men.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

Perfect Benevolence of God—Obſervations on Lord Bolingbroke's Philoſophy.

TO call God good, wiſe, and omnipotent, Hortenſia, without being able to comprehend the mode in which he exerciſes theſe attributes, is indeed making uſe of terms of reſpect, but it is not praiſing either with judgment or knowledge.

We can undoubtedly conceive what it is to be juſt or unjuſt, benevolent or cruel, but we can frame no idea of a moral attribute which partakes of neither of theſe diſtinctions:—in lord Bolingbroke's view of the ſubject, therefore, we can form no idea which can lead us to any rational reſpect for the Deity. Indeed his lordſhip is ſo thoroughly convinced of the neceſſity of judging the divine conduct on the principle of human ideas, that with a glaring inconſiſtency to thoſe obſervations he has made on the impiety of metaphyſicians and divines for having taken ſuch liberty, he makes himſelf a very free uſe of it, when he calls in queſtion the divine legation of Moſes, on the maſſacre of the Canaanites, becauſe ſuch a command

command does not ſquare with the pureſt notions we are enabled to form of juſtice.

It is a truth, that the ſceptic cannot invariably deny, that the moral attributes of God muſt be of a kind with the moral attributes of all intelligent natures; yet the attributes of God, muſt differ in the extreme in the degree of their perfection from the moral attributes of the creature, man.

His benevolence can never be alloyed with the weakneſs of partiality, with any variability, with any of thoſe ſudden ſtarts of high and low, which we perceive at different times and on different occaſions in the affections of the moſt perfect of the human race. It cannot be attended with any of thoſe paſſionate emotions which, though they may be conſidered as amiable defects in finite creatures, are altogether incompatible with the immutable ſublimity of the divine character. His juſtice, or to uſe a more adequate term, the fixed determinations which perfect wiſdom dictates, can never give way to any of thoſe feelings by which that uſeful and benign paſſion, ſympathy, counteracts the ſelfiſhneſs of our natures. That completion of independent happineſs annexed to his exalted ſtate, with a freedom from the interruptions which the appetites and paſſions, thoſe neceſſary but dangerous principles of activity in human exiſtence, muſt ſimplify his moral attributes

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in ſuch a manner as to allow of no mixture of contrariety.

To this reaſoning lord Bolingbroke would undoubtedly object, the fallibility of human ſagacity without the compaſs of its intelligence: but it may be replied, that the exiſtence of a God will want a rational proof, if we deny the certainty of human ideas on abſtract ſubjects. For if, according to his lordſhip's aſſertion, metaphyſical ideas have no exiſtence but in our own minds, how can we attempt to prove the exiſtence of any being elevated above the object of our ſenſes? But as his lordſhip declares himſelf to be a devout theiſt, he muſt allow us in this intereſting point, at leaſt to exceed thoſe narrow limits which he ſometimes preſcribes. And when we have ſoared ſo high into the regions of intellectual nature, as to find out the firſt cauſe, that troubleſome quality, reaſon, will ſtill be buſy with its dictates, and oblige us to aſſent to a ſtring of propoſitions ſuch as the following: "That the intelligence and wiſdom of God is proved by his works—That perfect wiſdom can never be at variance with perfect goodneſs—That God muſt therefore be perfectly good, according to the higheſt ſenſe of goodneſs that we are able to conceive—That by a certain neceſſary agreement and diſagreement in the nature of things, the moral attributes of God muſt be of an unmixed kind—That no cauſe can exiſt in the divine mind, to

give riſe to thoſe qualities and affections which take place in the human character—That he muſt conſequently be either perfectly malevolent or perfectly benevolent—That wiſdom, benevolence, and juſtice in the divine character, are one and the ſame thing—That notwithſtanding ſome untoward circumſtances, in the dark ſituation in which we are placed, carry a myſterious countenance, yet there is ſo great a degree of benevolence apparent through the whole courſe of providence, and impreſſed in ſuch plain features on the face of the creation, that the oppoſite attribute can never be the governing principle of the divine mind—That by a neceſſary connexion of ideas if it is there at all, it muſt exclude benevolence; or ſuch a mixture and diverſity of attributes muſt be allowed, as can exiſt only in the frame of a dependant being, ſubject to that deſire and averſion which attend wants, appetites, and paſſions—And if we can ſuppoſe that malevolence is the governing principle in the Deity, we muſt, contrary to the conſtant courſe of our experience, conclude him to be an impotent being, or ſo large a portion of good as is enjoyed could never be the lot of his creatures.

To endeavour, Hortenſia, to lower the divine origin of virtue, and reduce it into a convenient mode of human conduct, and to raiſe doubts on the rectitude of the Deity, tends to deprive us of the

the faith which is neceſſary to encourage our exertions in the overcoming thoſe difficulties which our frail nature has to encounter. It alſo takes away the greateſt and the ſublimeſt pleaſures which attend the exerciſe of the moral attributes —viz. the approbation which the believer thinks he receives from an all perfect beneficent being. What a delightful ſenſation is annexed to a benevolent action, on the reflection, that the encreaſing the happineſs of one of his creatures is pleaſing to God, and that ſuch an action is a faint copy of his goodneſs. On the other ſide, what a damp muſt it throw on all our exertions, when we believe, that after our utmoſt endeavours to act up to the rule of our judgment, we are only according with a ſyſtem of human policy, and that our virtue is in no kind an imitation of the divine archetype.

Lord Bolingbroke's doubts concerning the reality of human miſery, is a ſubject which lies in too extenſive a circle, and admits of too great a variety of obſervations to be diſcuſſed with pleaſure or improvement. I will not haraſs you, Hortenſia, with ſo tireſome an inveſtigation, nor ſhall I attempt to meaſure by weight and ſcale thoſe mental and corporal ſatisfactions and pains, which can alone come within the comprehenſion of the patient who ſuſtains them: but leaving his lordſhip and his diſciples to the experience of their own feelings, proceed to examine other poſitions

which come more within the limits of ſatisfactory argument.

On the ſubject of that adverſe fortune which has attended ſome great characters, and which to the frail and dark apprehenſions of man appears to carry in its train ill conſequences to the general happineſs of ſociety, lord Bolingbroke has ſelected inſtances, which naturally proceeded from the corruptions of a government, and the flagrant abuſe of temporal power. The inſtances ſelected by his lordſhip, are the fall and ſervitude of that flouriſhing commonwealth, Carthage—The revolution which took place in the more flouriſhing commonwealth of Rome, from an enviable ſtate of liberty to the loweſt debaſement of ſervitude—And laſtly, the fall and total diſſolution of that enormous empire, which at one time encircled in its dominions more than half the globe.

In lord Bolingbroke's liſt of thoſe popular characters who ſuffered in the public wreck, there are ſome, it is reported, who have not been altogether exempt from the corruptions of humanity. But as neither the uſury of Brutus, nor the queſtioned chaſtity of Scipio, nor the enormous vices of thoſe objects of vulgar admiration, the herd of military heroes, who fell victims to juſtice in the purſuit of their ambition, will ſerve his lordſhip's turn, he proceeds to call in queſtion the fidelity

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of Regulus, and to brand the patriotiſm of Druſus with the ſuſpicion of a factious taint.

The anecdote relating to the fate of Regulus, is found in ſo remote a period of the Roman hiſtory, that it is expoſed to a variety of doubts as to the reality of its more important circumſtances. However, if we take the matter on truſt as it ſtands in the records of that famous ſtory, a principle of candor will oblige us to give an indulgence to thoſe prejudices which take their riſe from national ſentiment, and to venerate the almoſt unparalled fortitude of Regulus, which on the ſtrength of principle could withſtand every powerful oppoſition ariſing from thoſe ſtrong impreſſions which the view of baniſhment from friends, country and family, added to the pangs of torment and of death, muſt neceſſarily make on the moſt heroick mind.

On the patriotiſm of Druſus, it muſt be obſerved, that in general the exertions of this virtue lie ſo expoſed to invidious cavils and remarks, that even a correſpondent ſucceſs in the fortune of the moſt immaculate of its votaries, will hardly ſhield them from the attacks of envy, and the hardneſs of incredulity. However, the concluſion which is intended to be drawn from his lordſhip's ſtate of the argument, viz. the equal diſpenſations of providence in the œconomy of human happineſs, and the juſt meaſure of reward and puniſhment, as it is

dealt out in this ſtate of exiſtence, lies open to unanſwerable exceptions: for though it be acknowledged, that Brutus was an uſurer, and that Cicero had imperfections; it may be aſked, why that deteſtable hypocrite, Auguſtus, was picked out as a fortunate inſtrument of providence, in the eſtabliſhing that ſyſtem of deſpotiſm which was to ſerve as a national puniſhment for national offences? On the poſition, that there is no after diſtribution of rewards and puniſhments, it may be queſtioned, whether it might not have been more agreeable to divine perfection to have made this murderer and parricide, as in the caſe of his uncle Julius, of Marcus Antonius, and of ſeveral of the firſt Roman emperors, the inſtrument of his own puniſhment, inſtead of ſuffering him by a proſperous reign, and an eaſy natural death, attended with plauſibility of character, to reap the full fruits of a well adopted policy? To theſe objections it may be added, that ſeveral of the beſt of the Roman emperors fell victims to the lawleſs barbarity of the prætorian guards, from the attempts they made to reform the corrupt manners of ſociety, and to introduce ſome order into the wild anarchy of the government: and that ſome of the worſt enjoyed a contrary fate. It may be alſo added, that Marius and Sylla, two of the firſt infringers of the laws of the commonwealth, died in their beds, whilſt their leſs guilty followers fell victims

victims to the ambition of their leaders. And to bring the point into the near proſpective of domeſtic hiſtory, it may be objected, that whilſt the errors of Harriſon were puniſhed with a cruel death, the crimes of the hypocrite Cromwell were attended with ſuch a ſeeming impunity, that the parricide was ſuffered to enjoy his choice of empire or true glory.

On the ſubject of thoſe whom his lordſhip acknowledges to be martyrs to principle, he reaſons thus; "They ſuffered the neceſſary conſequence of an over obſtinate and an over buſy zeal. It is agreeable to divine rectitude to admit the partial evil attendant on the undeſerved ſufferings of individuals, to produce a general good —Theſe individuals were victims to the welfare of ſociety." This argument ſeems to militate againſt itſelf, becauſe it ſuppoſes an admiſſion of moral turpitude neceſſary to the diminution of moral evil. However, when it ſerves a turn, we find this uſeful principle in the creed of the unbeliever given up, and the teachers of Chriſtianity condemned for admitting ſo groſs a ſoleciſm in religious ſentiments, as to preach Chriſt crucified for the univerſal good of the human race; though according to the fundamental principle of the Chriſtian doctrine, the higheſt reward that Omnipotence can beſtow, is annexed to this act of obedience and benevolence in the perſon of the Meſſiah.

LETTER V.

The ſame Subject continued—a Revelation in the Perſon of Chriſt, worthy of Divine Wiſdom—Arguments for the belief of a future State.

ON all that variety of argument and curious diſquiſition which we find in Lord Bolingbroke's philoſophical works, Hortenſia, it may be obſerved, that divines have given a great advantage to the enemy in the conteſt, by following them in all their irregular movements, and leaving that firm ground from whence they could never have been diſlodged.

In order to parry the various and contrary methods in which Chriſtianity has been attacked, they have ſometimes maintained a firſt revelation in the perſon of Adam; a ſecond in the perſon of Noah; and a third in the perſon of the Meſſiah. At other times, ſeduced by the ſophiſtry of the adverſary, and perplexed by the apprehenſion of calling into queſtion the neceſſity for a revelation in the perſon of the Meſſiah, they have maintained a contrary poſition, by denying all previous revelation as to a future ſtate in the perſons of Adam

Adam and Noah, or the poſſibility of diſcovering this abſtract truth by the ordinary courſe and progreſs of human reaſoning. At one time, they have inſiſted on the prevalence of evil in this ſtage of exiſtence, the inequalities of the human lot in the portions of pain and enjoyment, the undeſerved ſufferings of the virtuous, the triumphant fortune of the vicious, the abuſed power which ſome of the ſpecies have exerted over others, and an eternal rule of right and abſtract fitneſs of things, to evince on the principle of an invariable reaſon the neceſſity of a future ſtate of retribution. At another time, they have abandoned theſe ſtrong entrenchments which are proof againſt all the battery of fair argument, or the moſt ſubtle ſophiſtry, and cloſed with the enemy on grounds on which they are ſure to be defeated. They have denied an eternal rule of right for the government of all moral agents; they have rendered the wiſdom of the Deity, in the exalted ſenſe of the word, an unneceſſary attribute, by denying ſuch an independent difference of things as may give place for a judicious election. They have weakened the idea of ſuch an exalted power annexed to the nature of the firſt cauſe, as can ſurmount every difficulty, which does not imply a contradiction, in the attainment of thoſe ends, which perfect wiſdom muſt adopt. They have, contrary to thoſe facts, which the phenomena of nature aſcer-

tain, and the œconomy of life proves, argued, that either what is termed evil is more an imaginary than a real exiſtence, or that partial evil is neceſſary to a general good, becauſe it is not within the limits of God's power to produce a general good, without admitting it. They have argued, that partial evil is not to be conſidered as a defect in the ſyſtem of creation, and conſequently does not militate againſt the phyſical or moral attributes allowed to be inherent in the Deity.

That God ſhould have condeſcended to have revealed to the firſt pair, thoſe two important truths on which the purity of religious worſhip, and the happineſs and moral conduct of the human ſpecies ſo evidently depend, as the unity of the firſt cauſe, and a more exact diſtribution of reward and puniſhment in a future ſtate, is undoubtedly a conduct perfectly conſonant to divine wiſdom and goodneſs. That ſuch a revelation was repeated to Noah, and delivered by this patriarch to his poſterity, and afterwards adulterated into a multifarious theiſm, by that common courſe of ſuperſtition, which brought in almoſt ſimilar corruptions of the third revelation in the perſon of the Meſſiah, is in a manner authenticated by that general, yet confuſed, notion of theſe abſtract truths which prevailed in every ſociety in the known world. Particularly in the Eaſt, where it is ſuppoſed the firſt human pair enjoyed the bleſs-

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ing of exiſtence, and where the patriarchs inhabited.

This hiſtorical fact is allowed by Lord Bolingbroke, who uſes it as an argument, that the natural courſe of reaſoning, and philoſophical enquiry, is ſufficient to diſcover the firſt abſtract truth, and through the natural ambition of man, to foſter the laſt hope, without the ſupport of revelation. According to this author, from time immemorial, theſe opinions prevailed in the theological ſyſtem in the Theban dynaſty of Egypt, and maintained their ground, though mixed with a variety of different corruptions in this ſociety, and through all the extenſive empires in the eaſtern world.

The evidence of this hiſtorical fact, Hortenſia, does not in any degree militate againſt the neceſſity of a third revelation in the perſon of the Meſſiah. For either on the opinion, that theſe abſtract truths lie level to the ordinary progreſs of human reaſon, or were made known to man by two previous revelations, it is certain, that at the period when Chriſt came into the world, ſuch corruptions had ſuperſtition and human policy introduced, that the light of true religion, whether ariſing from the ordinary courſe of human reaſoning, or remote revelation, was entirely obſcured. Philoſophy, inſtead of lending her aid to reform and correct the religious opinions of men, or of attempting

attempting to recover the principles of true theology by tracing them back to their ſource, had wantonly deviated into the wildeſt tracks of ſcepticiſm. Lord Bolingbroke is obliged to confeſs, that it was the attention of the ſtate to ſupport the belief of a governing Providence, a reſpect for the Gods, and an opinion, that they were not indifferent obſervers of the conduct of men, which ſuſtained the morals of the Roman people; and conſequently, which ſo long preſerved in its original purity, that political conſtitution, and thoſe well adapted laws which had enlarged to ſuch an unrivalled extent the mighty fabric of the empire. He is obliged alſo to confeſs, it was the neglect of religion which produced the total overthrow of the beſt conſtitution of government which has ever been eſtabliſhed on earth.

As the vaſt extent of the Roman empire embraced within its bounds almoſt the whole of the civilized world, the diſcords which prevailed between the parties of Marius and Sylla, of Cæſar and Pompey, and afterwards between the republicans and the deſpotiſts, the horrid maſſacres and proſcriptions which enſued, and the triumph of vice and wickedneſs, had brought on a general confuſion in religious opinions. Atheiſm prevailed, the believer gave up the conteſt to the triumphant ſceptic, and every principle calculated to reſtrain the licentiouſneſs of unlimited power,

and the excited paſſions and appetites of the human race were totally removed out of the œconomy of human ſentiment.

On this juſt ſtate of facts, let the ſceptic declare, whether any period of time, or exigence of circumſtance, could be better adapted for the renewal of a revelation which tended to give life to religious ſentiment; to revive in the deſperate ſtate of men's minds, a regard to a governing Providence; to re-adjuſt the loſt balances between duty and intereſt; and to coerce on the reprobate world, a ſyſtem of religious and moral conduct by the promiſes and threats of rewards and puniſhments.

If this view of things ſhould be allowed to be conſonant to reaſon, will the ſceptic be ſo uncandid as to deny, that on every rational principle of argument, and on every fair ſtatement of the queſtion, a revelation of ſuch a kind was neceſſary, and was altogether worthy of the wiſdom and the goodneſs of the Deity?

On the ſecond ground of argument, ſo weakly given up by the divine, the following ſtatement of the queſtion muſt neceſſarily drive the infidel into evident contradiction, or oblige him to throw off his hypocriſy, and to confeſs his opinion, that there is no moral difference in the nature of things; that perfect wiſdom in the Deity, does not imply perfect goodneſs; that the phenomena of nature diſplay

diſplay more of the principle of malevolence than benevolence; and that we worſhip a demon under the reſpectful title of the father of the univerſe.

If there be any eſſential difference in the nature of things, that is, if there be any ſuch difference as conſtitutes the oppoſite qualities of good and evil, there muſt be an abſtract fitneſs or unfitneſs in moral entities to this difference. Now, if there be an abſtract fitneſs, or unfitneſs of things, God muſt be capable of diſcerning this difference in all their due proportions. And this perfect knowledge of all abſtract ideas conſtitutes the wiſdom of God; and a Deity, poſſeſſed of ſuch an attribute in its largeſt extent, can never ſuffer the final miſery of any being he has created. But even the virtuous man cannot always by his virtue obtain happineſs in this life, or avoid ending his ſhort exiſtence in a condition of miſery; therefore, this is a ſtate of trial aptly fitted for the exerciſe and improvement of that virtue which will find its fruition by an enlarged and more permanent enjoyment of its excellence in another ſtate. But if there be no other ſtate for man to enjoy the undiſturbed exertion of his intellectual faculties, virtue is defrauded of its juſt expectations, God is not omnipotent, or he is a being phyſically determined to evil, notwithſtanding all thoſe variety of effects which we perceive and experience, and which we muſt acknowledge can never proceed but

but from a cauſe perfect in power, wiſdom, and goodneſs.

Thus the eternal rule of right, proceeding from an abſtract fitneſs of things, the wiſdom of the Deity, his moral attributes, his omnipotence, and a future ſtate, are ſo united together in one neceſſary chain of cauſe and effect, that it is impoſſible to ſeparate them even in idea; and the man who doubts of one of theſe propoſitions, muſt neceſſarily extend his ſcepticiſm to all.

LETTER

LETTER VI.

The ſame Subject continued.

THE arguments which have been already uſed, Hortenſia, for the belief of a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments, will receive an additional ſtrength from an attentive examination of the human mind, with an exact inquiry into the nature of thoſe diſpenſations of a governing Providence, which, according to the aſſertions of the unbeliever, are of a kind to ſquare with the enlarged ideas of unlimited power, perfect juſtice, and perfect benevolence.

In the œconomy of the human mind, are comprehended the faculties of ſenſitive perception, with an intuitive knowledge of certain truths, called on this account ſelf evident. Such as a perception of the difference in numbers, a certain intellectual conſciouſneſs, or power, by which the mind perceives the nature of its own operations and reflects on its intellectual ideas, a judgment in perceiving their agreement and diſagreement, through all the extent of relation and compariſon, a power of generalizing and combining its ideas, in ſuch a man-

manner as to apprehend truths of the moſt abſtract kind; a power of memory, or calling up at will, all the variety of aſſociated and complex ideas which reſult from the exerciſe of the fore-mentioned faculties; and laſtly, the power of imagination, by which a variety of truths diſplay themſelves collectively to the perceptive mind. Hence the mind delights itſelf in adjuſting, with the aſſiſtance of the imagination, according to an exact criterion, every poſſible combination of thoſe truths that are annexed to the ſubject on which it contemplates, or which by the help of analogy, ſports itſelf in a fanciful creation of its own forming, dreſſes up falſehood in a garb of truth, exaggerates and diminiſhes objects, and combines real and imaginary exiſtences in ſuch a manner, as to make a pleaſant aſſemblage of witty and humorous images and conceits.

The faculty of ſenſitive perception, Hortenſia, is an inſeparable quality of ſenſitive exiſtence. Some power of perceiving the relation of ideas, and alſo ſome power of memory, appear to be ſo congenial or ſerviceable to ſenſitive natures, that the benevolent author of the creation has, together with the more unerring faculty of an inſtinctive principle, graciouſly condeſcended to beſtow them on a great part of the brute creation. Theſe then, no doubt, with an intellectual conſciouſneſs, are neceſſary to ſupport that rank

rank which man holds in the chain of gradation; and to ſuſtain thoſe privileges, on which his ſafety and well being depend. But that power of combining and generalizing his ideas, in ſuch a manner as to apprehend truths of the moſt abſtract nature, with the power of memory, in the large extent in which it is found in human exiſtence, are ſuperfluous and miſchievous gifts on the principle of mortality: for it is by theſe powers, that man unites, in one view, the paſt, the preſent, and the future; and feels all thoſe evils attendant on each different ſtage of time, which ariſe from real or imaginary ſufferings, from diſappointed hopes, from paſt pleaſures never to return, and all thoſe innumerable ills which take their colour from their comparative inferiority to that ideal good which his dangerous faculties enable him to frame.

Theſe, with the powers of imagination, which ſerve to inflame his appetites and his paſſions, and which alſo ſerve to exaggerate all the various colours of evil to a diſtracting height, might well have been ſpared out of the œconomy of the human mind, if they had not been neceſſary principles of knowledge and action, to render man capable of a more enlarged and a more uninterrupted happineſs in a future ſtate of exiſtence.

Had man been only created for the purpoſe of filling a rank on this terreſtrial globe, the ſyſtem of his œconomy would never have been conſtituted

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in ſuch a manner, as to have made this life a ſtate of trial, and his ſhort day would never have been chequered with ſo large a portion of miſery, as to render it a doubtful queſtion, whether exiſtence is worth having on ſuch ſevere terms. That high privilege, reaſon, which raiſes him to ſo painful a ſuperiority above his fellow animals, might have been well ſpared for a more uſeful inſtinctive principle, which would have neceſſarily led him to avoid every object of ſuch a quality as to bring on him pain and miſery, and to purſue every one neceſſary to the pleaſure and ſupport of his exiſtence. Had he been endued with reaſon, it might have been of that commanding kind, as to ſubdue every hoſtile impreſſion, and to be ſuperior to all the ſeductive excitements of appetite and paſſion. Or the appetites and paſſions might have been balanced by ſo ſtrong and over-ruling a ſympathy, as to counteract, on a principle of univerſal benevolence, all thoſe miſchiefs which he draws on himſelf and others, by an inordinate and injudicious ſelfiſhneſs. The ſhort ſpace of time alloted for his exiſtence, might in ſuch circumſtances, have been ſpent with the enjoyment of health and tranquillity, and in an uninterrupted ſeries of pleaſing ſenſations; neither riſing to the tumults of pleaſure, nor changing into the anguiſh of pain. And when he had finiſhed his courſe, he might have quitted his exiſtence with all that

ſoft tranquillity which attends the ſtate of the body, when it reſigns itſelf to the peaceful empire of ſleep.

By ſuch an œconomy of nature, exiſtence, however ſhort, muſt have been eſteemed a gift worthy of perfect benevolence to beſtow. But in regard to thoſe faculties of the mind, which on a ſtate of poſitive mortality ſeem to have been given as a curſe, rather than a bleſſing, their ever growing and improving powers form another very ſtrong conjecture in favour of their perpetuity.

If we conſider the frame and conſtitution of every ſenſitive being, we muſt be convinced of the goodneſs of that Deity, to whom we ſtand in the intereſting relation of a creature to his Creator. The enlargement of the gratifications of ſenſe in the inferior animals, the ſmallneſs of their wants, when compared with thoſe of the human ſpecies, with that inſtinctive principle by which they are invariably directed in the avoidance or purſuit of objects inimical or advantageous to their ſecurity and happineſs, make up in a large manner for the privation of the nobler faculty of reaſon. But in man, who ſtands expoſed for want of this inſtinctive principle, and by a more extenſive combination of exciting impreſſions to all thoſe miſeries which an inattentive and inexperienced creature muſt neceſſarily be expoſed, what a ſurpriſing diſplay of a benevolent ſagacity

do we find in the organization of his frame? Whilſt every mental and corporeal ſenſe is gratified by innumerable inlets of inferior pleaſures, which may be indulged with impunity to the principles of life and health, thoſe powers of gratification which, from their miſchievous nature, would without limitations act inimically on the body and mind, are confined within ſuch ſalutary bounds, as to excite the lamentations of a Tiberius and a Meſſalina. It is true, that the ſenſations of pain are more rigorous, and are elevated into a higher tone of feeling than the moſt exalted of the pleaſureable kind: yet we are made capable of receiving the inferior claſs of pleaſures, from all the objects which ſurround us, and carry about us ſources of innumerable delights from the affections of the mind, and the powers of the imagination, whilſt thoſe cauſes by which we ſuffer pain, do not in the nature of things ſo often occur.

On this ſurvey of the animal œconomy, we find ſufficient reaſon to conclude, that God is the indulgent father of the univerſe; and as his attribute of omnipotence is diſplayed in ſuch a manner as to produce conviction on the mind of every accurate obſerver of the phenomena of Nature, is it rational to agree to any other concluſion, than that evil was intentionally mixed with the draught of life to produce good, and that good not being

univerſally experienced in this life, it is to be expected in a future ſtate of exiſtence?

On an accurate enquiry into the nature of thoſe diſpenſations which, according to the aſſertions of lord Bolingbroke, are of a kind to ſquare with the enlarged ideas of unlimited power, perfect juſtice, and perfect benevolence, we ſhall find, Hortenſia, additional reaſons for the firm belief of a future ſtate. The extent of moral evil in the œconomy of the human ſyſtem, ſeems to have demanded from the omnipotent and all perfect Creator ſuch a ſuperintending providence, and ſuch an exact diſtribution of reward and puniſhment, as to have formed a kind of theocratical government. That is, ſuch a coercion of power over the whole race of human beings, as ſhould have univerſally protected the innocent, rewarded the meritorious, and kept the flagitious in awe. If the immediate care of the terreſtrial globe had been unworthy the divine mind, its particular government might have been aſſigned to one of thoſe created beings, who are favored with a high ſuperiority of intellectual excellence, and powers, adapted for ſuch an important end. For though it muſt be allowed, that virtue, or the moral law, does receive a kind of general ſanction from the conſequences annexed to the obſervation or neglect of its obligations; yet in the courſe of human events, the deviations from this rule are by far too numerous to admit in a poſitive

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ſenſe the general ſecurity of innocence and reward of virtue.

Does not the hiſtory of all countries and of all ſocieties, furniſh us with innumerable inſtances of this firſt claſs of moral agents, who have fallen victims to revenge, luſt, rage, avarice and inviting opportunity? how many innocent perſons have been ſacrificed to the miſtakes of law, and the corruption of judges? how many mental ſufferings have not thoſe ſcourges of humanity, the ſword and the muſquet, with all the bloody artillery of war, occaſioned in the breaſt of the parent, the child, the widow, the orphan, and in all thoſe ſeveral relations which form the bands of ſocial life? how many provinces have been laid waſte to ſatisfy the mad ambition of conqueſt, and what a herd of miſchiefs have not followed in its train; ſervitude, famine, poverty, and peſtilence? How numerous is the liſt of thoſe who have incurred, by one way or another, a martyrdom, for having directed their conduct on the rigid rules of conſcience? how pitiable, how tremendous a fate has attended a conſcientious fortitude, when ſet in oppoſition to the zeal of bigotry and the intereſts of ambition? But let us leave theſe conſpicuous traces of an ill fated virtue, and a ſuffering innocence, and enter into a ſurvey of the more private paths of life, and the ordinary courſe of human affairs. Here, the obſervations which we ſhall make on

the happy tendency of innocence and virtue, to promote the felicity of thoſe who poſſeſs theſe bleſſings, will be mixed with a variety of caſes, which, if they do not totally militate againſt this rule, muſt be allowed to form many exceptions to the univerſal extent of it. If we look into the matrimonial line, we ſhall find ſeveral ill fated pairs, who ſeem to have been formed with ſuch contrarieties of diſpoſition, as to embitter the draught of life on every principle of human conduct. Here poverty, diſeaſe, inteſtine broils, and a capricious tyranny, often overwhelm the innocent ſufferer, and diſturb the tranquillity of the calmeſt virtue.

Even in the tender relation of parent and child, abuſed power on one ſide, and a profligate ingratitude on the other, often bring grey hairs to the grave with ſorrow, or provoke the laſt act of human deſpair, the unnatural violence of ſuicide.

Theſe are the glaring inſtances of human wretchedneſs; but in all the relations of life, how often do the crimes and the indiſcretions of individuals bring the ill conſequences of poverty, and a variety of mortifications, on the innocent and the meritorious? how often, with the erroneous herd of mortals, do a few exterior graces of perſon ſupplant the moſt determined merit? how often is the moſt determined merit foiled by the fickle and intereſted conduct of individuals, or the capricious humour

humour of the multitude? What ſcorns and contumely does not honeſt poverty often ſuſtain, whilſt the flagitious knave triumphs in the abuſed accidents of fortune, and how frequently is the tranquillity of virtuous life diſturbed by the hoſtility of incidents which ariſe from the complicated ſources of moral and natural evil?

Beſide thoſe diſeaſes which the intemperance of parents bring on their offspring, there are others of the moſt acute and mortifying kind annexed to the frail ſtate of human exiſtence. The ſharp and rigorous pains of a fit of the ſtone, are almoſt ſuperior to the patience of the moſt determined fortitude; and madneſs, by ſubduing the reaſon of man, deprives him of every means of palliating in any degree the worſt of human miſeries.

With theſe interruptions to that general ſanction which the voice of experience allows to be given to the moral law, there are particular diſpenſations of Providence in the direction of this general ſanction, which evidently tend to confirm the candid and attentive mind in the belief of a future life; at leaſt for thoſe of God's creatures, who are formed to act on the principle of a moral agency. It is allowed by that famous ſceptic, Mr. Hume, that the felicities of a good conſtitution, a gay and volatile temper, with the advantages of temporal proſperity, will ſecure an impunity from thoſe ſtings of conſcience, and that

keen remorſe which commonly follow the blacker acts of turpitude. And even in the general courſe of events, the profligate is often brought to puniſhment, from the circumſtance of having ſuch a mixture of virtue in his character, as ſhall prevent him from taking all the neceſſary means to ſecure the ſucceſs of his ſchemes: whilſt the true machiavelian hero triumphs in his iniquity. The wiſdom of the children of Mammon is mentioned by the Meſſiah; and according to the obſervations of lord Shaftsbury, it is the thorough profligate knave, the complete villain alone, who can any way bid for happineſs with the honeſt man. True worldly intereſt is wholly on one ſide or the other; all between is inconſiſtency, irreſolution, remorſe, vexation, an ague fit from hot to cold, a perpetual diſcord of life, and an alternate diſquiet and ſelf diſlike. Another circumſtance, in the general direction of the ſanction of rewards and puniſhments to the moral law, demands from its peculiar nature, and its apparent tendency to the confirmation of our belief in a future ſtate, a very ſtrict attention. We find that ſorrow, and diſappointment, have commonly ſo beneficial an influence in the correcting the depravity of our natures, that theſe ſufferings go under the denomination of ſalutary chaſtiſements, and are regarded by the penitent ſufferer, as very promiſing inſtances of divine goodneſs. Now theſe diſpenſations

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which are made in a manner too remarkable to doubt of their authority, often happen to thoſe who are poſſeſſed of many virtues, though blended with great frailty and imperfection. The diſpoſition of the ſufferer is from this circumſtance, corrected ſo entirely, as to drive out all that alloy which ſullied his brighteſt virtues. But this happens at a period of his life, when the correction of his nature can be of no ſervice to himſelf or others on this ſtage of exiſtence; and on the ſuppoſition of a poſitive mortality, would be a wanton exerciſe of cruelty. Indeed, to ſuppoſe that the Creator will ſuffer the abandoned villain to finiſh his courſe in a triumphant career of ſucceſs, attended with the ſatisfaction of a ſelf complacency, and that he will puniſh others of his frail, yet comparatively virtuous creatures, with the anguiſh which muſt ever be annexed to the keen ſenſations produced by temporal calamity, remorſe, and ſelf diſapprobation, is a ſoleciſm in religious ſentiment: for if the moral law is to be conſidered as of divine authority, no kind of poſitive puniſhment can enſue from the obſervation of it in any inſtance, nor can it be thought, that an impunity will attend its entire violation in ſome of the creatures, whilſt a more partial omiſſion of its precepts is ſeverely puniſhed in others.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

The ſame Subject continued—Moral Perfections of God.

THE natural antipathy and abhorrence of a rational creature to annihilation, Hortenſia, is ſo great, that it has been urged by ſome as an argument in favor of the oppoſite opinion; and it muſt be acknowledged that thoſe who can bear the thoughts of annihilation with ſatisfaction, appear to be excluded by their nature from thoſe rapturous pleaſures ariſing from the higher claſs of rational enjoyments.

The hopes of an improved nature and a glorious immortality, have been the natural ambition of all good men; and in the perſon of Socrates, was united with the ſoundeſt principles of philoſophy. However, there are ſome who with an over nice delicacy pretend, that it argues a ſelfiſhneſs degrading to the nature of virtue, to frame any hopes, or even to form a wiſh for the attainment of ſuch an exalted happineſs as muſt overbalance the merit of any human exertion: but it will be found that the truely devout and philoſophical Chriſtian puts all merit

merit on the ſide of the creature totally out of the queſtion, and only grounds his hopes on that diſplay of benevolence which is to be obſerved in the ſyſtem of nature, and thoſe extenſive capabilities of miſery and happineſs both mental and corporal, which were given him by the Creator. As to the charge of acting on a ſelfiſh principle, he abſolutely denies the juſtneſs of that remark, and avers, that it can only affect thoſe who have annexed a groſſer idea than himſelf to the pleaſures of a future exiſtence, and who regard immortality as a price for having ſacrificed the purſuits of a vicious inclination. He declares, that he loves virtue for its own ſake; and he is ambitious of the bleſſings of a future ſtate, becauſe he ſuppoſes it to conſiſt in that improved condition of his nature, as may enable him to taſte its pleaſures in the moſt exalted ſenſe, and without any alloy of human infirmity.

According to lord Bolingbroke's aſſertion, men are in general ſo fond of exiſtence, that they will indulge the belief, though loaded with the burthen of a poſſible damnation. However, the deſire of being ſet at freedom from puniſhment, occaſioned many among the ancients as well as the moderns, to exhauſt all the ſources of ſophiſtical reaſoning to perſuade themſelves and others out of this comfortable belief. The ancient ſceptics, indeed, perceived the neceſſity of allowing that virtue muſt be annex-

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ed to the idea of a firſt intelligent cauſe; that this principle muſt comprehend the attributes of juſtice and benevolence, and that a ſtate of retribution was to be inferred from theſe poſitions. It was on theſe grounds, that they denied the exiſtence of a Deity: but as ſuch a denial is found to be at variance with all the principles of abſtract philoſophy, the moderns have adopted a different mode of ſcepticiſm,—they acknowledge a Deity, yet deny him the attribute of goodneſs.

When philoſophy, Hortenſia, had driven atheiſm out of all thoſe entrenchments which had received their ſupport from ignorance, ſhe retired into the holds of theiſm, and the diſbelief of a future ſtate. This is conſidered as a more honorable tenure; and thus the modern philoſopher is very angry with the term, atheiſt, though it is very plain that the principles of his reaſoning as much exclude all religious and moral conſideration, as thoſe of the mere atheiſt. For whether with Democritus, we account for the formation of the univerſe by the fortuitous concretion of atoms—whether we regard the univerſe as animated and ſupreme—or whether we annex ſupremacy to any other being poſſeſſed of intelligence—If we regard this being as totally unconnected with his works—If he is too great to take our happineſs or miſery into conſideration—If he is too wiſe to grant any protection to our frail and feeble virtue—If he takes

takes no cognizance of our actions—If we do not expect from him either reward or puniſhment—he is as much out of the queſtion in regard to human conduct, as if he was out of the conſtitution of things; and cannot expect the reſpect of his creatures for the poſſeſſion of an attribute, which is more an object of terror than of love.

Having thus endeavoured, Hortenſia, to remove the difficulties which the miſchievous ingenuity of the ſceptic, and the weak conceſſions of the believer, have raiſed to thoſe high probabilities which the light of reaſon, independent of revelation, points out to the anxious mind of man, concerning his hopes of a future ſtate of exiſtence; and having ſhewn that thoſe probabilities are grounded on a ſpecies of reaſoning which is leſs liable to deceive, than the fallibility of ſenſe, I ſhall proceed to examine the tenability of thoſe grounds on which lord Bolingbroke ſupports the fabric of human virtue, and which he recommends as the only ſure foundation of an uncorrupted religion, and a pure morality.

The foundation of a rational religion, and a pure morality, have been by all the ancient writers ſuppoſed to reſt on an exalted idea of the moral perfections of God, and in the obligations which lie on all rational agents to direct their conduct on the plan of the divine archetype. Lord Bolingbroke diſdaining to tread in beaten paths, founds

founds his ſyſtem of religion and ethics on oppoſite principles. After having taken great pains to prove the falſity of the ideas of a natural and a moral evil, he acknowledges that many of the phenomena of Nature are repugnant to every human idea of goodneſs and juſtice, and therefore, that every hypotheſis founded on the poſition that goodneſs and juſtice according to human ideas exiſt in the divine character, muſt be erroneous; as muſt the opinion alſo which is founded on ſo erroneous an hypotheſis, that every one who acts in oppoſition to the happineſs of the creature, man, will be rigorouſly puniſhed by the Creator. Though in the courſe of his lordſhip's reaſoning, God's wiſdom is ſet ſo much at variance with his goodneſs, as to imply a direct contrary attribute to exiſt in the divine character; yet in the ſame manner as the devout Canaanite would have endeavoured to believe of his ferocious idol Moloch, he ſometimes conceives him to be poſſeſſed of goodneſs in a tranſcendent degree, but in a mode that is not to be comprehended.

To ſhew that the laws of Nature cannot be founded on moral attributes, lord Bolingbroke aſks, to what actions of the Deity we can apply, or from what we can deduce, our notions of human juſtice? How, continues his lordſhip, ſhall we deduce fortitude from the attributes of God, or aſcribe this virtue to him, who can feel no pain,

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or be expoſed to any danger? How temperance, when it would be the moſt horrid blaſphemy to ſuppoſe him ſubject to any human appetites and paſſions, and much more to ſome appetites ſo inordinate as require a particular virtue to reſtrain and govern.

It is eaſy to ſee that this chain of reaſoning would bring us into the abſurdity of ſuppoſing an incapacity of moral virtue in the Deity: conſequently, that moral virtue has no intrinſic perfection in its nature; or with the philoſopher Seneca, to ſuppoſe that a perfect man is in a moral ſenſe, a more perfect being than God, becauſe his nature and ſituation enlarges his capability for the exertion of more virtue. But to cut the chain of this reaſoning before it runs us into folly or blaſphemy, let us take for granted what cannot be eaſily diſputed, that perfect wiſdom implies the poſſeſſion of every moral excellence. Let us take for granted, that the divine mind has within itſelf the principles of every virtue, and the capability of exertion, though ſome of the virtues may not be compatible to its exalted ſituation, and the purity of its nature to exerciſe: and if it may be permitted to uſe a compariſon between the creature and the Creator, let us take it for granted, that all the virtues are in the mind of God, what fortitude would have been in the mind of Cato, if the civil ſtate of the empire had been

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ſuch as could not have afforded him an opportunity of exerting it?

To return again, Hortenſia, to the chain of lord Bolingbroke's reaſoning, who, after a kind of confeſſion that he has puzzled himſelf in attempting to reconcile the human idea of imperfection, with the human idea of perfection, and an acknowledgement of an exiſting evil with the denial of its exiſtence; he very piouſly warns us not to hearken to thoſe, who tell us what we may expect God will do; but inſtead of pronouncing what is right for him to do, believe all which he has done for that reaſon, right. After this pious warning, his lordſhip proceeds to eſtabliſh morals on the principle of a well directed ſelf intereſt. He aſſerts the truth of theſe maxims, "That ſelf love, and ſocial, are the ſame—That the reaſon of man is adequate to the eſtabliſhing principles neceſſary to promote and ſecure the happineſs of every individual in the happineſs of ſociety—That the conſtitution of which we make a part, impoſes theſe laws on mankind originally; and that when they are thus impoſed, they determine the will of our ſpecies as effectually, and oblige as ſtrongly, as the moſt powerful principle of human nature can determine, and oblige human creatures." Society, ſays his lordſhip, cannot be maintained without benevolence, juſtice, and the other moral virtues; theſe virtues, therefore, are the foundations

tions of ſociety; and thus men are led by a chain of neceſſary conſequences from the inſtinctive law, which is the deſire of happineſs, to the rational law of Nature, which is the means of procuring this happineſs. Self love operates in all theſe ſtages; we love ourſelves, we love our families, we love the particular ſocieties to which we belong, and our benevolence extends at laſt to the whole race of mankind, like ſo many different vortices; the center of them all is ſelf love; and that which is the moſt diſtant from it, is the weakeſt. This will appear to be in fact the true conſtitution of human nature. It is the intelligible plan of divine wiſdom. Man is able to underſtand it, and may be induced to follow it by the double motive of intereſt and duty. As to the firſt, real utility and right reaſon coincide: as to the laſt, ſince the author of our nature has determined us irreſiſtably to deſire our own happineſs, and ſince he has conſtituted us ſo that private good depends on the public, and the happineſs of every individual on the happineſs of ſociety, the practice of all the ſocial virtues is the law of our nature, and made ſuch by the will of God, who having determined the end and proportioned the means, has willed that we ſhould purſue one by the other.

Lord Bolingbroke having thus laid down theſe principles, as the only foundation of human vir-

tue, appears to be ſomewhat apprehenſive, leſt they ſhould affect the utility and ſuperiority of theiſm over atheiſm; in contradiction to Mr. Bayles famous paradox, he aſſerts, that there is no compariſon can be drawn between the theiſt and the atheiſt—That the atheiſt ſees it his intereſt, but the theiſt ſees it his duty, to obſerve the law of nature—and he adores the divine goodneſs that has blended together ſo marvelouſly and ſo graciouſly, his greateſt intereſt and his greateſt duty. Every kind of knowledge whereof our nature is capable, combines to ſhew the theiſt, that God ſpeaks to man in his works, and ſignifies his will by them; he can neither be in doubt whether it is God that ſpeaks, nor be at a loſs to underſtand the divine language. An atheiſt, ſays his lordſhip, who has much imagination, much elevation of mind, and a great warmth of inward ſentiment, may perhaps contemplate the difference in abſtract conſideration, and contraſt the beauty of virtue and deformity of vice, till he falls in love with the former; he may create as it were an artificial moral ſenſe; but how much more lively muſt this ſenſe be in the theiſt, who knows not only that virtue is the perfection of his nature, but that he conforms himſelf by the practice of it to the deſigns of infinite wiſdom, and co-operates in ſome ſort with the Almighty.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

Obſervations on Lord Bolingbroke's Philoſophy.

THOUGH lord Bolingbroke, Hortenſia, does not chooſe to ſink the honor of theiſm ſo low as to put it on a level with the exploded ſyſtem of atheiſm, as to its influence on moral conduct; yet it is obſervable, that the atheiſt and the theiſt, who diſbelieve in a future ſtate, both agree in the opinion, that ſelf love is not only the governing principle, but the only principle which actuates the conduct of the human character; for having both agreed to ſink the hopes of the animal, man, into the ſuppoſed mortality of the brute, they will not allow him to be poſſeſſed of a nature deſerving a higher fate.

But in examining an opinion which is equally maintained by the atheiſt Hobbes, and the theiſt Bolingbroke; let us, whoſe arguments tend to a contrary ſuppoſition, endeavour to diſcriminate thoſe differences which the adverſary wilfully confounds, and ſhew that ſelf love, in the groſſer ſenſe of the word, is of a very oppoſite nature to a rational ſelf intereſt.

As it may be eſteemed the ſelf good of every narrow minded creature, to be placed in a ſituation where all things to which he ſtands in relation, is ſubjected to his will; ſo it may be eſteemed the ſelf good of a noble and liberal minded creature, to enjoy the higher felicities which ariſe from the exerciſe of the exalted virtues. Here then we ſhall find a principle of action which correſponds with the idea of a refined ſelf love. But independent of thoſe pleaſurable ſenſations which attend the refined affections, and the elevated ſentiments and paſſions, there is a principle of rational agency which correſponds with the preciſe admeaſurement of every action, by a rule of right: although the conduct it directs, militates againſt natural inclination and the intereſt of natural affection, and where every pleaſurable ſenſation is ſacrificed to the conviction of judgment, and to the rigid dictates of a well informed underſtanding.

Pure religion and pure morality draw their perfection from this ſource alone; and as the conformity of action to the duties enjoined by theſe principles, form the perfection of every rational agent, ſuch a conformity muſt be the only rule of intereſt of every being endued with the powers of reaſon. Hence we gain an idea of that intereſt which muſt ever attend on rational nature. Indeed, there are very few of the human ſpecies who have there

ever uniformly acted up to the principle of such an exalted virtue; yet it must be allowed, that characters have existed among the sons and daughters of men, whose general tenor of conduct have been conformable to it; and consequently that this species of virtue is not altogether incompatible with human nature.

But we will not, Hortensia, insist any longer on those immutable principles of virtue, which have no place in the creed of Lord Bolingbroke. We will engage with his lordship on his own grounds, and examine how, on the principles of self love and self enjoyment, the intrinsic value of virtue can in the way of argument be so enforced on the human judgment, as may with any colour of probability insure its exercise in any exalted degree, or in any universal extent.

As lord Bolingbroke does not allow of any rule arising from the abstract fitness of things, nor from any pattern of excellence, to be traced in the divine mind, as fundamental principles on which to ground the rationality of human conduct, we must find these principles in a certain sagacity, and in the discovering that rule of action, which is the best adapted to interest in the grosser sense of the word, or to the attainment of a continued series of the most pleasurable sensations.

The appetites, passions, and affections, either of

the innocent or the virtuous kind, are the neceſſary inſtruments to convey to the body and the mind of man, every poſſible mode of pleaſurable ſenſation. But theſe appetites, paſſions, and affections, are of that turbulent nature, as to impoſe with ſuch an authority over the weak power of reaſon, that they confound her entirely in the proper diſcrimination of things. The blind monitor is often at a loſs in the ſcience of perceiving ſuch an agreement or diſagreement in the nature of things, as may lead her into a choice of thoſe ſources of delight which are to be found in the principles of a rational happineſs, or to improve and cultivate ſuch of them as may beſtow the higheſt, the moſt laſting, and the moſt uninterrupted felicity, and to neglect or ſtarve the growth of thoſe which have a more doubtful tendency. Indeed lord Bolingbroke ſeems to be ſo convinced of the difficulties which lie in the weakneſs of reaſon, and the ſtrength of paſſion, that he pronounces it altogether incompatible with the frail nature of man, to acquire ſuch a degree of rational excellence as ſhall aſſiſt him to a ſtrict obſervance of the moral law. In his curious account of the phenomenon of moral evil, he ſuppoſes that the gift of ſuch a rational excellence never was in the divine plan, becauſe altogether incompatible with that rank of intelligent beings in which man is placed. Here then we find a ſtrange contradic-

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tion; altogether as repugnant to the human idea of wiſdom, as ſome of the phenomena of nature in Lord Bolingbroke's view of things are to the human idea of benevolence. For if we allow that a law is given to creatures, who by a poſitive defect in their natures are not capable of underſtanding its dictates, we muſt be obliged to confeſs, that the wiſdom of the law-giver is altogether incomprehenſible to our weak faculties; and ſhould we admit that this law is coerced in ſuch a manner as ſhall render the breach of it penal to a creature whoſe poſitive defects diſable him from following it, we muſt be guilty of the preſumption deprecated by his lordſhip, viz. the aſcribing to the all perfect Being, what is evidently repugnant to our ideas of perfection.

But, ſays lord Bolingbroke, can you tame the uncontroulable paſſions of the ſpecies, by any other method of awakening them to a ſenſe of their real intereſt? Has the ſanction of rewards and puniſhments, as delivered in the precepts of revealed religion, done it? and if theſe powerful motives fail of ſuch an effect, can ſuch an effect be produced by the eſtabliſhment of an invariable rule of right, to which the underſtanding may give a cold aſſent, but which will never have ſufficient force to cope, for maſtery with the potent power of the paſſions? To this reaſoning, it may be ſaid, that the eſtabliſhment of an in-

variable rule of right to direct the conduct of all rational agents, ſupports on a firm and immoveable foundation, the ſanction of future rewards and puniſhments, as delivered in the precepts of revealed religion. That this ſanction, according to his lordſhip's acknowledgment, muſt operate very beneficially on the groſs ſenſe of the herd of mankind; and that the eſtabliſhment of ſuch an invariable rule of right to direct the conduct of all intelligent agents, confirms the judgment of the philoſopher beyond the doubts of the moſt ſubtle ſophiſtry; and whilſt it teaches him to diſcover a rational intereſt in an obedience to its dictates, a belief that the reaſon of the divine mind correſponds with his idea of virtue, will give to virtue a beauty and an excellence capable of attracting his admiration, and warming all the affections of his ſoul towards it.

We muſt, Hortenſia, agree to the propoſition of lord Bolingbroke, that a ſenſe of the groſſer intereſts of ſelf, will lead to the exerciſe of ſome of the eſſential ſocial qualities; ſuch as the forming of ſocieties for defence, ſubmitting to the rules of government, and co-operating with the magiſtrate in the coercion of law; and that the ſenſe of a more refined ſelf-intereſt will in ſome characters produce ſentiments which go under the denomination of a moral taſte. But the ſocial qualities neceſſary to the formation and defence

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of ſocieties, are limited to theſe effects, and act very little to the ſupport and preſervation of thoſe manners, on which the well-being and happineſs of the ſpecies at large depend. A moral taſte is ſo intimately connected with natural diſpoſition, and the turn which the paſſions and affections take, that it muſt, from the nature of things, be circumſcribed within narrow limits. For ſhould you attempt to perſuade a man, who is naturally avaricious, cruel, inſenſible of the feelings of ſympathy, and attached to all the intereſts of ſelf gratification, that his greater intereſts lie in the pleaſure which he receives from the indulgence of his more beneficent affections; ſhould you endeavour to engage him to cultivate the oppoſite means of ſelf good, he will anſwer you, that his conceptions of ſelf good are different from yours; and that every man has his peculiar taſte. If he has ſufficient reading for the purpoſe, he will quote the authority of lord Bolingbroke for the aſſertion, that one man can never judge of the *ſummum bonum* of another; that he is ſatisfied with his own choice, and he wiſhes you a perfect enjoyment of yours.

If you reaſon after this manner with a man who has inflamed his imagination with the hot purſuits of ambition, he will tell you, that he perceives his intereſt to lie in the exerciſe of ſuch ſocial qualities, as preſerve in ſome meaſure the com-

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pacts of ſociety; but as to any nice regard to the rights of men, a rigid obſervance of thoſe laws of the conſtitution on which its internal welfare, and the general happineſs of the citizens at large depend; as to ſuch regard to juſtice and integrity, as will prevent him from ſpoiling the public, if opportunity invites, or of raiſing himſelf by the diſpenſations of its rules, either in a private or public capacity, theſe are mere metaphyſical diſtinctions which he does not comprehend, nor ever intends to perplex himſelf with, leſt he ſhould be perſuaded, like the dog in the fable, to part with the ſubſtance, for the mere ſhadow of good.

If you direct your moral inſtructions to a man who is in the poſſeſſion of an abuſed power, he will tell you, that power is the only excellence you allow to the Deity. He will tell you, that he can perceive by the conſtitution of things, that ſome of God's creatures are made to ſerve as inſtruments for the gratification of more fortunate beings, and that he ſhall never give up the privilege of ſituation for an idle chimera of virtue, which tends to produce a more equal diſpenſation of good than he finds to be in the divine plan.

If you argue with a man who is inflamed with the heat of a luſtful appetite, he will tell you, that it is folly in the extreme to ſuppoſe that the appetites were given for any other end but to be gratified; and if you urge that the ſeducing innocence,

nocence, or violating the peace of families, are immoral actions, he will aſk you upon what authorities you found your documents; not ſure on the principles of ſelf good, for I feel, will he ſay, that the ſacrifice you ſeem to require, is quite contrary to my happineſs.

Theſe mortifying anſwers, will undoubtedly be given by all thoſe engaged in the groſſer purſuits of enjoyment, or who are of a temper to be gratified in any of the vicious diſpoſitions of the mind. But when the philoſopher has been foiled by the impotence of thoſe principles on which he pretends to preach the advantages which attend the practice of virtue, even by the groſſeſt and the moſt profligate infringers of its ſacred laws, how will he be puzzled, and in what manner will he arrange his arguments, if he ſhould attempt to inculcate thoſe high principles of ſelf denial, and ſelf devotement, which the exalted actions of heroic virtue demand?

The man of moral taſte may ſay, I find a calm ſerenity of ſoul, and a pleaſure in the exerciſe of the virtuous affections, which are more than ſufficient to compenſate for the ſacrifice of all the groſs enjoyments of ſenſe, and thoſe fantaſtic objects of happineſs which take their riſe in a diſordered imagination. But what arguments can you urge, for the reaſonableſs of giving up an exiſtence, which the exerciſe of virtue has rendered

dered happy, for the ideal phantom of an heroic merit? Should I be inclined, from a kind of fickly ambition to this ſelf devotement, what arguments can perſuade me, that it will be truly meritorious thus to give up the intereſts, the ſafety and ſecurity of my family, whom nature has more immediately placed under my care, for the ſake of acting the part of a Quixotte in morals. Had I but the ſatisfaction of believing in the doctrine of this invariable rule of right which you reject, I ſhould have ſome ſtandard whereby to direct my conduct, and ſhould indulge the comfortable conviction, that I was faintly imitating the tranſcendent virtues of that divine character, whoſe approbation gives the ſtamp of excellence to the actions of every finite creature. But how, on your principles of ethics, can I tell, whether by ſuch a ſelf devotement, I ſhould not oppoſe the courſe of an evil which is pre-determined by the divine will, and conſequently not in the power of an inferior being to diminiſh in any reſpect. Nay, in what manner can I be certain, that ſuch unrequired efforts will not be regarded as an impertinent and bold attempt to break through the rank in which I am placed in the ſcale of creation, and the meeting with a halter may be the judicial conſequence annexed to ſuch preſumption.

It is very plain, that if we had no other rule to walk by but the law of Nature, traced by the idea

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which the corrupt mind of man forms of ſelf happineſs, this rule would be of as variable a complexion as are the different conſtitutions and diſpoſitions of men. The groſs ſelfiſh man would have a rule for himſelf, in which we may be ſure that benevolence, temperance, and moderation, would have no part.

All the principles of a ſympathiſing tenderneſs would be excepted by the cruel; juſtice and integrity would be excepted by the ambitious and the avaricious; whilſt the philoſopher, whoſe acquired knowledge and wiſdom leads him to follow the dictates of virtue in the ordinary courſe of its practice, would reaſon himſelf out of every generous propenſity which militates with his preſervation, and in particular thoſe which are hoſtile to the dictates of natural affection. In this ſyſtem of philoſophy, therefore, no conſideration can have a ſuperior weight to the intereſts of friends, family, and all the tender ties of blood. For though in the general ſenſe of the term, public good may be ſaid to conſtitute private good, yet in the œconomy of political ſociety, there will be found in the different ſituations of individuals, many exceptions to this rule; and theſe exceptions will always be felt when any obvious advantage may accrue by a departure from the line of public duty. The betraying public truſt in caſes where the happineſs of preſent and ſucceeding generations

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are concerned, may ſet ſome families in a ſtate of power and worldly proſperity beyond what the adherence to any ſuch rule of duty could do; and thus it muſt be very plain to any accurate reaſoner, that if the rule of intereſt is the only criterion by which we are to judge of the nature of virtue, and the will of the Deity, when that intereſt lies on the ſide of turpitude, it follows, that it muſt be the will of the Deity to purſue it through every direct and indirect path. And if abſolute power can in any intelligent agency conſtitute right, it muſt be the peculiar eſſence of this attribute to give an arbitrary quality to all the actions of moral agents: it will therefore follow, that abſolute power can never be ſo abuſed as to conſtitute the quality of a vicious agency in any perſon who is poſſeſſed of ſuch a privilege; nor will it be true wiſdom to ſacrifice ſelf preſervation by any oppoſition to its dictates.

Thus we ſhall be inſenſibly led by the conſequences ariſing from ſuch poſitions, to accede to Mr. Hobbes's principle of ethics, and reſolve all human morality into the will of the magiſtrate. For can it be ſuppoſed that God will preſcribe a rule to his creatures, which is the direct contrary to what he follows himſelf? It cannot be on a principle of benevolence, for that is denied to be ſeen in the conſtitution of things. It cannot be on the principles of wiſdom, for ſuch a kind of

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wiſdom implies benevolence. And if a man is only to be directed by his notions of happineſs in the conduct of life, the making a wrong choice can never be eſteemed vice, nor can any harder term be given to it than an error in judgment.

The admitting therefore any opinion which militates againſt the immutable nature of virtue, or which leſſens the idea of the perfect benevolence and tranſcendent excellence of God's moral attributes, tends to weaken every fixed rule of human conduct, and muſt neceſſarily act to the corruption and depravity of human nature. It muſt encreaſe the growth, and the exceſs of all the baneful appetites and paſſions, to the diſcouragement of every attempt to ſubject the vicious inclinations to the true principles of public and private happineſs, and muſt render the generality of mankind inſolent in proſperity, abject in a ſtate of dependance, and overwhelmed with deſpair in a ſtate of adverſity. Even among the moſt judicious and enlightened of the ſpecies, moderate epicuriſm will on theſe principles be the moſt exalted kind of virtue which can prevail. Lord Bolingbroke himſelf ſeems to acknowlege, that without an eternal and invariable rule to direct the conduct of all intelligent beings, no ſyſtem of morality can be eſtabliſhed. For what one of the ſpecies aſſerts to be a moral action, will be diſputed by another; and thus the rule of duty

will vary as it ſuits convenience, or is agreeable to prejudice.

I cannot leave this ſubject, Hortenſia, without obſerving, that the laying down erroneous principles, and falſe rules of conduct, ſets the underſtanding on the ſide of the paſſions, and therefore engages in a vicious courſe of action, men, whoſe cool tempers, and natural ſtrength of judgment, enable them to be more miſchievous to the temporal happineſs of others than to their own;—ſuch men are evils of a more peſtilent nature in ſociety, though ſometimes regarded with reſpect and veneration, than the maddeſt and the moſt unfortunate of thoſe victims to paſſion to whom the reſentment and often the malevolent perſecution of the world is pointed.

It is thus that the modern theiſts have ſet God on the throne of righteouſneſs; and by denying the doctrine of a future ſtate, they are obliged to call the ſound principles of morality in queſtion, or to admit that God, in our ſenſe of the word, may do evil. But on a fair and candid ſurvey of the queſtion, it will appear to be more diſreſpectful to the firſt cauſe, than the wild opinions which Epicurus entertained of the nature of the heathen deities. For theſe beings are repreſented as infinitely above attending to the cares of humanity, and ſporting themſelves with enjoyments adapted to celeſtial taſte. But the god of the modern theiſt,

actuated with the insatiable vanity of a human artist, amuses himself through all eternity in the contemplation of his ingenuity and sagacity, regardless of the effects of that large portion of evil which he is obliged to admit. He sees, without concern, that the good which falls to the lot of his creatures is enjoyed by the worst of them, whilst the best are exposed to evils which in some cases appear too severe for the punishment of a flagitious wickedness. Thus it will be found, that every attempt to account for the phenomenon of evil by the common place observation, that partial evil is universal good, must, in the œconomy of moral conduct, be productive of the worst consequences; because it necessarily limits either the power or the benevolence of the Deity, and teaches the prosperous to look with contempt on the unfortunate part of the species, as not coming in the nature of things within the compass of God's mercy and benevolence.

LETTER IX.

Some of the Contradictions to be found in Lord Bolingbroke's Works pointed out—No miraculous Interpoſition neceſſary to confirm or ſtrengthen the Evidence of Goſpel Revelation.

IF you will take the pains, Hortenſia, to read the fourth volume of lord Bolingbroke's works, 8vo. edition, you will find it full of contradiction and abſurdity.

Firſt, the author contradicts himſelf, when he declares that man who, according to his own hypotheſis, is ſtamped by his Creator with the character of vice, for the purpoſe of adapting his nature to his ſituation, is the author of all the evils he ſuffers by his deviations from the line of moral rectitude. Secondly, he allows that the vices and corruptions of individuals, proceed from the corruptions of government; and then aſſerts, that individuals, who ſuffer from the abuſes of government, ſuffer deſervedly. Thirdly, under the higheſt profeſſions of reſpect for the author of Nature, it contains a greater libel againſt his providential government than the doctrine of Epicurus: and whilſt his opinions tend to deſtroy every principle of hope, confidence, and religious

aſſurance

aſſurance in the mind of man, they afford no remedy for the miſery to which the human ſpecies are ſubjected, but that which lies in an apathy of feeling and ſentiment; ſo contrary to the frame and conſtitution of our natures, that it has ſtamped a ridicule on the beſt ſyſtem of philoſophy that ever was connected with human evils and mortality. A ſyſtem which, however repugnant to the experience of mental and corporeal ſenſation, has none of thoſe innumerable inconſiſtencies and contradictions which are to be found in lord Bolingbroke's ſyſtem of religion and ethics. But the apathy which is recommended by his lordſhip, as a remedy for the evils which he ſuppoſes to be deſignedly inflicted by the Creator on his creature, man, is ſo far from being the only comfort that omnipotence is willing or able to beſtow, that the Almighty has condeſcended to reveal to us his benevolent intentions. He requires not of us a ſlaviſh reverence on the principle of fear, but invites us to cultivate that knowledge of his goodneſs, which is ſo well calculated to inſpire love. To thoſe who ſhut their eyes from the proſpect of a bleſſed futurity, and wilfully continue in the dark gloom of ſceptical perverſeneſs, we may truly apply lord Bolingbroke's ſatirical obſervation, "That they do not ſeem to have been ſet by their reaſoning faculties ſo far above the brute animals, as to appear deſerving of a better lot at their death."

death." But why ſo ſevere, ſays the ſceptic—How can you deduce any argument for the weakneſs of our reaſoning faculties, from doubts which the phenomena of nature ſo fully authorize—do we not ſee that every animated or inanimate being loſes that property which ſupports life, and falls into a ſtate of corruption and total annihilation? We are told indeed, that ſome perſons have borne teſtimony to a reſurrection of the dead, but can you bring any credible witneſs to the truth of ſuch a miracle within the memory of man? As the laſt revelation has failed of its effects, why is it not followed with another, attended with circumſtances of ſuch an authority as ſhall change ſcepticiſm into the determined principle of certainty? For God having given us our ſenſes as the only inlets to knowledge, no teſtimony which contradicts the evidence of theſe ſenſes as they are affected by the ordinary courſe of the eſtabliſhed laws of Nature, ought to be received by us.

It will be evident to you, Hortenſia, that according to this reaſoning, revelations attended with circumſtances of a ſupernatural power, muſt be ſo often repeated, that they would become the ordinary courſe of providential government, and turn the empire of human laws eſtabliſhed on the principle of human reaſon, into a theocratical police. If reſurrections from the dead were to become the common objects of obſervation, where would

would be the trial of faith, and where would be the reality of that virtue which was forced on the mind and inclinations of man, by the terrors and the hopes ariſing from ſo poſitive an aſſurance of ſuch a reinſtatement as ſhould render the deſerving and the criminal, the ſubjects of reward and puniſhment?

Would not ſuch an undeniable demonſtration of power and intention, deſtroy the force of that variety of motives which actuate the human mind, and produce ſuch a neceſſity for religious ſentiment and moral conduct as, by removing all moral evil, would alſo take away all the advantages which have been premiſed to attend a ſtate of trial and probation. The rational grounds of faith are of ſuch a nature, and the blindneſs of human reaſon has been ſo fully enlightened by revelation, that a repetition of this kind of inſtruction, would be a work of ſupererogation; and whilſt the Deity condeſcended to force conviction on the minds of the perverſe and the negligent, he might introduce a circumſtance in the courſe of his providence, which in the preſent more enlightened and more generally communicable ſtate of the world, would deſtroy every principle of action, but thoſe of a ſlaviſh kind.

The enemies of our religion, Hortenſia, found their moſt plauſible arguments on that inconſiſtency in reaſoning, which is to be found in thoſe

divines, who argue for an abſtract fitneſs of things, to be perceived by human agents, and a conformity of the divine volitions and conduct with that abſtract fitneſs, and who at the ſame time ſupport thoſe queſtionable points of faith which evidently militate againſt theſe opinions. It is indeed moſt earneſtly to be wiſhed, that the Chriſtian teacher would not give ſuch advantages to the enemy, as muſt ariſe from the keeping too cloſely to the literal text of ſcripture; and that they would not attempt to ſubdue the reaſoning faculty by authority, inſtead of ſupporting authority by a criterion which is given us by God, as a rule of our faith. It is alſo much to be lamented, that they too often debaſe the intrinſic value of virtue, by repreſenting vice as a thing rather profitable in itſelf, and to be rejected only on account of the penalties which are annexed to a diſobedience of the laws of God. This encourages a ſlaviſh ſervitude on the ruins of a generous fealty, leads mankind into a miſtake on the principles of a worldly intereſt, induces a ſordid traffic of delivering up the goods of the body for the ſake of the ſoul, and repreſents the fountain and the ſource of all felicity as a maſter, who expects the ſacrifice of ſome of the real objects of happineſs, as a neceſſary attainment of a future good. But this is not the voice of reaſon or of ſcripture. "In my ſervice there is perfect freedom," ſays the Meſſiah; and

the reaſon is plain; for the empire of religious ſentiment, and the empire of reaſon, is the ſame. They both emancipate us from the moſt abject, the moſt ruinous, and the moſt painful of all ſervitudes; that ſervitude which attends the dominion of the paſſions, and ſubjects our reaſon and our intereſt to their overbearing rule.

It has often been ſaid, that ſome of the moſt devout people, are the moſt addicted to the groſſeſt intereſts of ſelf. This, if true, muſt undoubtedly ariſe from the ſordid nature of that allegiance which they pay to the Deity, and from the falſe conceptions they have entertained of the generous principles of his ſervice. I muſt acknowledge, Hortenſia, that I have often heard with regret ſome very moral and religious people declare, that if they had been aſſured of the poſitive mortality of their nature, their lives would have been directed by a contrary rule. Thus, if by ſuch a perſuaſion they had gained a liberty from the reſtraints of religion, they would have followed every perverſe motion of their will; and found to their coſt, that their liberty conſiſted in the being kept in a continual ſubjection to their paſſions, and the being impoſed on in their moſt important choice. For what do the ſevereſt reſtraints of religion lay on us, but that which the dictates of our reaſon ought to render agreeable? To do juſtice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God: are

principles on which the eſſential part of rational religion and rational morality are founded, and ought to meet with the concurrent teſtimony of every well regulated mind. It is beyond a doubt, that the virtuous affections duly eſtabliſhed in a rational creature, are the only means which can procure him a conſtant ſucceſſion of mental enjoyments; and therefore they are the only means which can procure him a permanent happineſs. To this truth, let thoſe bear witneſs who can remember the condition of their minds under a lively affection of a chaſte and a well regulated love, of gratitude, of bounty, of generoſity, or of pity; and can remember it alſo in the oppoſite condition, under the hateful and painful affections of luſt, envy, anger, and revenge. If any one can doubt that ſobriety, temperance of all kinds, and moderation, are the beſt means to preſerve the pleaſures of an uninterrupted health and correſpondent pleaſing ſenſations; let him compare his corporal and mental faculties as they were enjoyed under the peaceful reign of virtue, to the laſſitude, the ſatiety, the univerſally painful ſenſations which follow gluttony and debauch, and the wild uproar of riot and miſrule.

The royal preacher very juſtly ſays of wiſdom, "Her ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace;" and thoſe who have a ſufficient depth of reflection to diſcover the ſuperiority of happineſs

happineſs which lies on the ſide of thoſe who regulate all their affections by the unerring rule of this divine monitor, to thoſe whoſe conduct is governed by the capricious tyranny of the paſſions, will acknowledge that the calm ſunſhine of a life well ſpent, is a very advantageous exchange for the dazzling gleams of a proſperity purchaſed with the ſacrifice of all which can be deemed excellent in a rational agent.

But there is yet another tranſcendant advantage which lies on the ſide of wiſdom—it is in the ordinary courſe of things a ſecurity againſt every inroad of adverſity. The conduct of a good and a benevolent man, ſo entirely ſquares with the intereſts of his fellow creatures, that he will find from the ſelfiſh paſſions of men, a ſupport and a comfort in all thoſe afflictions which he incurs from evils, inſeparable to human exiſtence; whereas the wicked man, from the ſame principles of conduct, has no ſtable comfort in the affections of his fellow creatures; and when deſerted by fortune and involved in any calamity which his vices bring on him, he will find an enemy even in his boſom friend, and will fatally feel his ſhort lived proſperity, which at the very beſt was a mixt and turbulent ſtate of enjoyment, to be inſtantaneouſly changed for that wild deſpair which attends the uninterrupted hoſtilities of internal and external foes, and will ſink unpitied and unlamented into the

the abyſs of extreme miſery. If ſuch then are the advantages which attend that benign and benevolent character, which extends the exertion of the active principle to the good of every object that comes within its reach, that gives a temporary relief to pain, and which in ſome degree ſoftens the terrors of deſpair; what rational creature would not in the ſtoic language be ambitious of becoming the ſhining purple in the garment, rather than the foul web—i. e. a character ſtained with the deformity of vice, and whoſe noxious qualities ſpread the contagion of error and misfortune to every being who comes within the ſphere of its action.

The knowledge of the true and intrinſic value of virtue, as it muſt raiſe the very rational ambition of attaining its excellence, is undoubtedly one of the moſt important means for the acquirement of its poſſeſſion. But the knowledge alſo of the mechaniſm of the human mind, which includes the knowledge of its diſcipline, will be found not only an uſeful but a neceſſary auxiliary in the conteſt between wiſdom and folly, between the dictates of the underſtanding and the tumultuous deſires of the paſſions. A man not trained from his infancy in the method of this diſcipline, will often find himſelf worſted in the hour of contention; nor ought this to fill him with any more timidity than what correſponds with an uſe-

ful

ful and becoming diffidence; for can the ſobriety of ſentiment ſuffer us to believe that a childhood and youth ſpent in a heedleſs ignorance, will be followed by effects which can alone proceed from the maturity of a wiſdom laborioufly gained? No great thing is to be brought to perfection ſuddenly, ſays Epictetus, when not ſo much as a bunch of grapes are. If you tell me that you would this minute have a bunch of grapes, I will anſwer you, that there muſt be time; let them firſt bloſſom, then bear fruit, then ripen. Is then the fruit of the vine not brought to perfection ſuddenly, and in one hour, and would you poſſeſs the fruit of the human mind in ſo ſhort a time, and without trouble? I tell you, expect no ſuch thing.

LETTER

LETTER X.

On the Philoſophy and Doctrines of the Stoics

IN a compariſon between the Stoic and the Chriſtian philoſophy, Hortenſia, with a great deal of truth much has been ſaid for the ſuperiority of the Chriſtian ſyſtem.

From that elevation of thought and ſentiment, ſays the Chriſtian divine, which the principles of our faith inſpire, we muſt, if we are ſincere in our belief, be rendered ſuperior to all the allurements which the tranſient pleaſures of a few years preſent to us. With this hope ſet before us, all the afflictions of the preſent life will ſeem light and trifling, and be loſt in the conſideration of that eternal weight of glory which awaits our continuance in well doing. This is a very juſt deſcription of the advantages that attend the principles of the Chriſtian faith, and which muſt ever give it a great ſuperiority over any ſyſtem of philoſophy that is not founded in the belief of a future ſtate of retribution. But before we paſs ſuch an entire condemnation of the ancients, as may deprive us entirely of that good ſenſe which is to be found in ſome of their writings; let us conſider their treatiſes

tiſes as written under the obſcurity of pagan darkneſs, and not too ſtrictly compare them with ſyſtems of religion and morality, illuminated by the ſtrong lights received from the revealed will of God, and the future diſpenſations of his providence.

It has been already obſerved, that the two revelations made by God in the perſons of Adam and Noah, had ſo early loſt their influence by the corruptions of idolatry, that the Greeks had no notion of a future ſtate, until they received ſome dark and confuſed hints from the eaſt, in the tales of their firſt bard, who is known to the moderns by the name of Orpheus. And though a more rational doctrine of the immortality of the ſoul was afterwards taught by Pythagoras, who alſo gained the elements of his theological knowledge from Egypt, yet it was ſoon obſcured by the idle and miſchievous ſophiſtry of philoſophic vanity. The common herd of men were ignorant to a pitiable degree, and their betters reliſhed opinions, which gave them the enjoyment of their appetites free from the reſtraint of puniſhment. The aſſertion, that there is no Hades, nor Acheron, nor Periphlegethon, was reliſhed with an avidity which ſoon baniſhed from the literary and polite circles, thoſe opinions of more ancient and more ſober times, which had kept their anceſtors within the uſeful bounds of religious reſtraint. To ſtop that general

general depravity which neceſſarily followed atheiſm, ſome of the more intelligent and ſober minded attempted a method of reaſoning, to convince mankind that virtue, in the ſtricteſt ſenſe of the word, was the rational intereſt of a creature endowed with a degree of intellectual excellence, which placed him not only in a ſuperior ſtation to the brute creation, but which equalled him in one ſenſe to the Deity; whom they conſidered as the original fountain of every principle. Nor did this opinion flow from any criminal arrogance, but from the ignorance of thoſe truths concerning the creation, which are to be found in the writings of Moſes. It was a principle of the ancients, that nothing can be made out of nothing; and the only difference between the ſtoics and the academicians was, that the latter ſuppoſed man to ſtand related to God, as part of the ſame nature, through the courſe of ſucceſſive productions of inferior intelligencies; but the former placed man in an equal rank with the firſt principle in nature, by ſuppoſing him an immediate emanation from the Deity. Socrates is ſo memorable for the glorious attempt he made to reform the manners and the opinions of the age in which he lived, and for the martyrdom he ſuffered in conſequence of this conduct, that he is ſtiled, by way of pre-eminence, the apoſtle of the pagan world; and though he did not commit any of his opinions to writing,

writing, yet the gratitude of his numerous diſciples, among whom Xenophon and Plato are the moſt illuſtrious, has handed down to poſterity the ſublime documents of their maſter, and in particular, the original and comprehenſive manner in which he inſtructed mankind, and his ſhrewd way of leading them by pertinent queſtions to thoſe concluſions which are conformable to the dictates of right reaſon. Socrates may be regarded as the father of all the different ſects of philoſophy, except the Epicurean, which diſtinguiſhed Greece as the only ſchool for uſeful and ſublime literature, from the period of this philoſopher's appearance, to the downfall of all ſcience and learning in the total ſubverſion of the Roman empire. The academic ſect of philoſophers were founded by his diſciple, Plato; and the cynic, by his diſciple Antiſthenes. Antiſthenes and his followers maintained the uſeful principle, that virtue is the higheſt good, and the end of life; and they treated riches, honour, and power, with great contempt. But their enmity to ſcience and polite literature, and to thoſe refinements in manners which even the moſt barbarous ſocieties have adopted, diſguſted ſome of their nicer followers; and in the perſon of Zeno, who lived about three hundred years before the Chriſtian æra, gave riſe to the ſtoic ſect, which may be regarded as a reformed branch of the cynic philoſophy. The doctrines

doctrines of this ſect, like that of all others which maintain any permanence in the opinions of men, went through a courſe of gradual improvement until it was taught in its higheſt purity and conſiſtence, by Epictetus at Rome, and at Nicopolis in the reign Domitian.

Epictetus corrected and explained many of thoſe ſtrong and figurative expreſſions which had been repreſented as abſurd principles in the ſtoic creed; and though the revival of the belief of a future ſtate, which followed the general ſpread of Chriſtianity in the time of the Emperor Marcus Antoninus, produced a kind of dubious faith on the important article of the perſonal immortality of the human ſoul; yet as this ſyſtem of philoſophy is founded on the opinion, that the intelligent principle in all beings, is in a finite time abſorbed into the ſource of all intelligence, and thus loſes the privilege of identity and perſonal happineſs, and with it the future rewards of virtue and penalties of vice, they found themſelves obliged, in order to make their doctrines correſpond with the attributes of juſtice and benevolence in the Deity, to maintain that true wiſdom or virtue is its own reward, and vice its own puniſhment. The conſcious merit of having overcome difficulties by the proper exertion of the rational faculty, that ſacred depoſit committed to their care and uſe by Jupiter, they regarded as a ſufficient recompence for

for the higheſt exertion of virtue; and they taught their diſciples to conſider every trial to which they were expoſed by the accidents of life, as marks of the favour of heaven. Remember, they ſaid, that God, like a maſter of exerciſe, has engaged you with a rough antagoniſt; and to what end? that you may be a conqueror, like one in the Olympic games; and it cannot be without toil. To all other pleaſures, oppoſe that of being conſcious that you are obeying God, and performing, not in word, but in deed, the duty of a wiſe and a good man. Say to yourſelf, that God ſhows me to mankind, poor, without authority, ſick, leads me to priſon, expoſes me to death; not that he hates me, for who hates his beſt ſervants? not that he neglects me, for he does not neglect any of the ſmalleſt things, but to exerciſe and make uſe of me as a witneſs to others appointed to ſuch a glorious ſervice. Do I ſtill care then where I am, or with whom, and in what ſituation?

The univerſe, ſaid the ſtoics, is ſurely but ill governed, unleſs Jupiter affords the means for his ſubjects to be happy. On this ground of reaſoning, they argued, that every wiſe man has a ſelf ſufficient principle of happineſs; that every thing muſt be indifferent which is independent of this ſelf ſufficient principle, whoſe privilege conſiſts in the power of making a right choice, and adapting its deſires to every circumſtance it cannot avoid.

Hence with the ſtoics, pain, pleaſure, death, life, beauty, deformity, poverty, wealth, fame, infamy, ſlavery, and power, muſt in their nature be indifferent; becauſe, independent of choice, according to the ſtoic, he alone is free who has gained ſuch an empire over paſſion and appetite as to mould his inclinations, or in their own words, his deſires and averſions, to the will of the Deity and the neceſſity of the occaſion. And he alone is a ſlave who has fixed an ideal good to ſuch things as are not within the limits of his own power; an error which neceſſarily deprives him of his natural liberty, by ſubjecting him to the capricious ſway of his paſſions, and to thoſe who are enabled to beſtow on him what he ignorantly regards as good.

As they conſidered vice and error to be inſeparable, they regarded all falſe conceptions of good and evil, all weak and wicked volitions, as they entrained in their conſequences, hatred to God, and diſobedience to his commands, as equally vicious, when theſe falſe conceptions and volitions regarded a more or a leſs important object. Hence aroſe that famous paradox of the ſtoics, that all crimes are equal; and if we take this into conſideration, that every volition carried into execution by a correſpondent action, which militates againſt our notions of right, is a compleat victory over the dictates of our judgment and our conſcience, and argues a ſtate of mind unequal

unequal to temptation, we ſhall find on an abſtract view of the queſtion, a greater equality in crimes, than can be obſerved in the particular conſideration of offences.

Conduct me, Jove, and thou, oh Deſtiny!
Wherever your decrees have fixed my ſtation,
I follow cheerfully! and did I not,
Wicked and wretched, I muſt follow ſtill!—

Is an exclamatory prayer often uſed by the ſtoics, who regarded any repining or murmuring at the decrees of heaven, or even the want of a chearful compliance with theſe decrees, as a great impiety of ſentiment.

When death overtakes me, ſays Epictetus, I would have it overtake me when I am engaged in the care of my own faculty or choice; I would be found ſtudying this, that I may be able to ſay to God, have I tranſgreſſed thy commands? have I perverted the power, the ſenſes, the preconceptions which thou haſt given me? have I accuſed thee, or cenſured thy diſpenſations? I have been ſick, becauſe it was thy pleaſure, and willingly; I have been poor, becauſe it was thy will, but with joy; I have not been in power, becauſe it was thy will, and power I have never deſired. Haſt thou ever ſeen me out of humour on this account? have I not always approached thee with a cheerful countenance, pre-diſpoſed to execute thy commands? is it thy pleaſure that I ſhould depart from this aſſembly? I depart. I give thee

all thanks that thou haſt thought me worthy to have a ſhare in it with thee, to behold thy works, and to comprehend thy adminiſtration.

Let death overtake me whilſt I am thinking, whilſt I am writing, whilſt I am reading ſuch things as theſe. A wiſe man, ſays the ſame Epictetus, mindful who he is, and whence he came, and by whom he was produced, is attentive only how he may fill his poſt regularly and dutifully to God. Is it thy pleaſure that I ſhould continue longer in being, I will continue free ſpirited, agreeable to thy pleaſure, for thou has made me incapable of reſtraint in what is my own; but haſt thou no farther uſe for me, I ſubmit. I have ſtaid thus long for thy ſake alone, and for no other, and now I depart in obedience to thee; but whilſt I am employed in thy ſervice, whatever poſt thou ſhalt aſſign me, like Socrates, I will die a thouſand times rather than deſert it. If thou ſhalt ſend me where men cannot live according to nature, I do not depart from thence in diſobedience to thy will; but as receiving my ſignal of retreat from thee. I do not deſert thy ſervice, but I perceive thou haſt no further uſe for me.

The living a life according to nature, was, in the ſtoic language, the living a life according to the ſtricteſt rules of virtue; comprehending in theſe rules an entire devotement of ſentiment to the will of the Deity. And as the ſtoics, with all the

the ancients, and ſome of the moderns, accounted for the phenomenon of evil by ſetting limitations to the power of God, whenever the evil was of ſuch a forcible nature, ſo far as to overcome the natural and acquired ſtrength of the mind, and to produce even a reluctant ſubmiſſion, they opened the door of death to their diſciples, and adviſed them to depart out of a life which they could no longer ſuſtain, either with honor to themſelves, or to their maker, or with uſe to their fellow creatures, whoſe virtue might be affected with their unavailing complaints. Do not, ſaid they, diſgrace the ſacred depoſit committed to your care, by continuing an exiſtence ſtained with vice and infirmity. Whilſt you live, never complain of God or man; if you complain of the one, you complain of that order of things on which the general good of the univerſe depends. If you complain of, or are angry with, the other, you are angry with a creature who ought to be the object of your pity, and whoſe errors flow from his ignorance of truth, and of his greateſt good. Every man endeavours to purſue his intereſt, and no man is wilfully deceived on this eſſential point. Beſides, if you never was in the wrong, you never can have been really injured: for it cannot be in the nature of God's diſpenſations, that one man ſhould do evil, and another ſhould ſuffer for it. Whilſt you live, live to the honor of God,

and to the advantage of his creatures; but when circumſtances are of ſuch a nature that you can no longer live a life of reaſon and virtue, depart; the door is open; but remember to depart cheerfully, and with a thankful heart to God, who has graciouſly permitted you to be a ſpectator of the glorious wonders of his power and wiſdom, who has committed to your care a portion of himſelf, and who has condeſcended to admit you as a kind of fellow labourer in the great work of producing a general happineſs.

The admiſſion of ſuicide in their ſyſtem of religion and ethics, is one of the loudeſt, and one of the moſt popular objections which has been made to the ſtoic doctrine. But this objection ought, in the reaſon of things, to be conſidered as a comparative, not a poſitive deformity; it is a comparative deformity, when put in oppoſition to the more excellent ſyſtem of the Chriſtian religion; becauſe if we do annex any rational idea to the turpitude of ſuicide, it muſt be on the principle of an unlimited power in the Deity, and conſequently that all the ſufferings of his creatures are permitted for the production of a propoſed end. Thus argues the Chriſtian; as it is always in God's power to deliver me out of this exigence, if he thinks it expedient, my voluntary exit will be a ſinful deſerting my poſt, and a rebellious oppoſition to the will of the Deity.—

Again,

Again, if we conſider the ſtoic admiſſion of ſuicide as reaſonably flowing from the principles of ancient philoſophy, we muſt confeſs, that it is far from a poſitive deformity, but rather a real excellence in their ſyſtem, and the only principle which could render it conſiſtent or practicable; becauſe it is the only principle on which ſuch an independence from the power of natural and moral evil could be procured, as ſhould ſecure in ſuch a creature as man, the uninterrupted practice of ſo rigid a virtue as the ſtoic doctrine exacted.

Beſide, the admiſſion of ſuicide is perfectly agreeable to the opinion of ſuch a limited power in the Deity, as diſables him from protecting his creatures in all ſituations; for ſurely the notion that God exacts from his creatures the endurance of a miſery which is ſo inſeparable from the nature of things, that he has not power to extricate them from it, is an idea very repugnant to perfect wiſdom and perfect goodneſs.

LETTER XI.

The ſame Subject continued.

YOU tell me that you are become half a ſtoic, Hortenſia: I do not wiſh to make you a zealot for this ſyſtem of philoſophy, but I ſhall uſe my endeavour to remove your prejudice againſt it, by effacing thoſe miſrepreſentations which bigotry and ignorance have raiſed in your mind. I dare ſay you have often heard the ſtoics ridiculed for maintaining that a wiſe man is perfectly beautiful, and that a wiſe man never changes his determination. Such an abſurdity may have been adopted by ſome of the leſs reflecting and leſs enlightened ſtoics; but it is not ſupported by Epictetus, who repreſents a poſitive denial of all diſtinction as to the external form of the ſpecies, as a puerile affectation: becauſe, when we only conſider forms, we muſt allow that one form is more beautiful than another. The contrary poſition to this, he ſaith, is the fooliſh and clowniſh notion of thoſe who are ignorant of the nature of things, and are afraid that whoever perceives this difference, muſt preſently be carried away and overcome. Agreeable to the ſound principles of his philoſophy, Epictetus contends, that the form of the body, when brought into

conſideration

conſideration with the only true excellence, the beauty of a well regulated mind is in its nature perfectly indifferent, and ought to be held ſo by the wiſe. He alſo contends, that as true excellence or beauty does not conſiſt of fleſh and hair, but in the due exertion of the mental faculty, if a man takes care to maintain this excellence, he will be truly beautiful. As to the ſecond abſurd propoſition which is charged on the ſtoic doctrine, that a wiſe man never changes his determinations, Epictetus repreſents this as a falſe conſtruction put on thoſe precepts of the ſtoic philoſophy which recommends a freedom from reſtraint, and which enjoins ſteadineſs and fortitude. We ought to keep our determinations, ſays he; but not all, only ſuch as are right: begin by laying the foundation in an enquiry, whether your determination be a ſound one or not; and then build your firmneſs and conſtancy upon it. One of the popular arguments which has been with the greateſt ſucceſs urged againſt ſtoiciſm, is, that frigidity of ſentiment as to all external objects, which it ſtrongly inculcates, as neceſſary to preſerve the mind in that ſtate of tranquillity and freedom which is ſo proper to produce volitions that may always correſpond with the courſe of Nature, and the will of the Deity. It muſt be acknowledged, Hortenſia, that the documents of the ſtoics on this ſubject, are delivered with a ſtrength equal to the importance

ance of the principle which they endeavour to inculcate; and have furniſhed their antagoniſts with arguments calculated to rouſe the reſentment of the ſympathiſing part of mankind, who conſider this philoſophy as an enemy to all the ſocial affections.

But as ſtoiciſm admitted of a high degree of ſcepticiſm on the perſonal happineſs of the ſoul in a future ſtate of exiſtence, it was proper, in order to preſerve the piety of ſentiment, to maintain that every neceſſary power was given by the Deity to ſecure the undiſturbed felicity of a rational agent. This it was impoſſible to do, without inculcating ſuch a principle in ethics as ſhould free the mind from the rigorous impreſſions which proceed from the tranſports of paſſionate ſorrow; and indeed a tranquil ſubmiſſion to the will of the Deity is every where inculcated in the precepts of the Chriſtian religion, at the ſame time that rewards are graciouſly ſet forth as a proper encouragement to exertions which combat the force of the moſt natural and the moſt virtuous affections. But the ſtoics aſpired to the exaltation of this heroic ſubmiſſion, independent of the pleaſing and encouraging hope afforded by the Chriſtian revelation; and candour muſt admire the attempts they made to arrive at the pinnacle of human piety, while they were deprived of the glorious proſpect of a reward far ſuperior to the value

value of any poſſible virtue in a finite being. On the ſevere accuſation, that ſtoiciſm is an enemy to all the ſocial affections, let us hear Epictetus, who condemns Epicurus for adviſing his followers to preſerve their independent happineſs, by abſtaining from marriages, from public offices, and other ties, which he regarded as eſſential obligations; and maintains, that it is the virtuous man who can alone fulfil all the duties of ſocial life.

After telling his diſciples that they were not to be undiſturbed by paſſions in the ſame ſenſe as a ſtatue, but as thoſe who preſerve the natural and acquired relations, as ſons, fathers, brothers, good citizens, he ſhows that all men naturally adhere to that which they eſteem their chief good. So one who hath ſet his affections on thoſe things which ought to be indifferent, becauſe independent on choice; whenever thoſe falſe objects of affection intervene, they will break the ſlenderer ties of parental and filial duty, of love and friendſhip, and weaken or eradicate all thoſe ſocial qualities in the mind on which the ſympathiſing part of mankind ſo highly value themſelves. It is undoubtedly true, Hortenſia, that a conduct grounded on principle, will always be more regular and more conſtant than a conduct founded on mere feeling and paſſion, which muſt ever be ſubject to be overborne by a ſtronger feeling and a more impetuous paſſion, ariſing from a falſe conception of the greateſt good.

This

This is finely illuſtrated by Epictetus, in the following very natural repreſentation of brute and human conduct, "Do you not often ſee", ſays this philoſopher, "little dogs careſſing and playing with each other in the greateſt ſeeming friendſhip; but to learn what this friendſhip is, throw a bit of meat between them. Do you throw an eſtate between you and your ſon, and you will ſee that he will quickly wiſh you under ground, and you him, and then you will exclaim, what a ſon have I brought up; he would bury me alive! Were not Eteocles and Polynices born of the ſame mother and the ſame father? were they not brought up together—did they not ſo kiſs and fondle one another, that any one who ſaw them would have laughed at all the paradoxes which philoſophers utter about love? And yet when a kingdom, like a bit of meat, was thrown between them, ſee what they ſay, and how eagerly they wiſh to kill each other? For be not deceived, no animal is attached to any thing ſo ſtrongly as its own intereſt. Whatever appears to be a hindrance to that, be it brother, or father, or child, or miſtreſs, or friend, is hated, abhorred, and execrated. Whenever, therefore the gods ſeem to hinder this, we vilify even them, and throw down their ſtatues, and burn their temples, as Alexander ordered the temple of Eſculapius to be burnt, becauſe he had loſt the man he loved."

Who-

"Whoever can make his intereſt to conſiſt in the ſame thing with ſanctity and virtue, with his country, parents and friends, all theſe are ſecured: but on the contrary, when it is made to interfere with theſe friends, family, country, and juſtice itſelf, all give way—for wherever I and mine are placed, thither muſt every animal gravitate. If therefore I be placed in a right choice, then only I ſhall be a friend, a ſon, or a father, ſuch as I ought."

"If you hear of any men, that they really ſuppoſe good only to be placed in choice, and in a right uſe of the appearances of things, no longer take the trouble of enquiring if they are father or ſon, or old companions and acquaintances, but as boldly pronounce that they are friends as that they are faithful and juſt, for where elſe can friendſhip be met, but with fidelity and modeſty, and a communication of virtue."

"Whoever therefore among you ſtudies to be, or to gain a friend, let him cut up all his falſe principles by the root; thus he will be ſecure from inward reproaches and conteſts, from change of mind and ſelf torment. To every one like himſelf, he will be unreſerved; to ſuch as are unlike, he will be patient, gentle, mild, ready to forgive them, as failing in points of the greateſt importance; but ſevere to none, being fully convinced of Plato's doctrine, that the ſoul is never willingly deprived of truth."

LETTER

LETTER XII.

The ſame Subject continued.

IF we compare, Hortenſia, the ſentiments and documents of the ſtoics with thoſe which are to be found in the precepts given by the Meſſiah and his followers, we ſhall not perceive ſo much difference as has been apprehended. We are frequently warned by Chriſt "not to ſet our affections on things on earth; for where the affections are there will the heart be alſo;" and we ſhall find, that indifference to every object which does not regard the purifying our ſouls, is inculcated in the goſpels with ſtronger figures of ſpeech than is uſed by Epictetus.

"If any man comes to me, ſays the Meſſiah, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and his own life alſo, he cannot be my diſciple." Whoever underſtands theſe ſtrong figures of ſpeech right, can underſtand them in no other light than as a chearful giving up every intereſt which interferes with the line of our duty, and a ready ſacrifice of all our deſires, averſions, purſuits, and affections to the will of the Deity. And ſurely no improper degree of apathy, nor any ſen-

timent which militates againſt the ſocial virtue of the human character, can be ſuppoſed to be contained in the doctrine of the Chriſtian religion, which beyond all others recommends and enjoins as indiſpenſable qualities, the ſublime virtues of univerſal charity, love, and benevolence.

It has been advanced by almoſt all the Chriſtian writers, that repentance for ſins is not enjoined in any ſyſtem of paganiſm; but repentance for ſins ſeems to be ſo congenial to human ſentiment, that it is difficult to believe, that it ſhould not have a place in every ſyſtem of religion. It is true, that matters of form and ceremony, ſuch as ſacrifices, confeſſions, penances, ablutions, and purifications, effected the ſame deception over the minds of pagans as they now do over the minds of the papiſts, and were too often uſed in the place of the only ſacrifice that God will not deſpiſe, viz. the ſacrifices of a contrite heart. But the forms uſed in the celebration of the Eleuſinian myſteries, ſeem to ſhow, that repentance was a neceſſary part of purification, and that the impenitent could not be admitted. A man ſhould come to theſe myſteries, ſays Epictetus, with ſacrifices, and with prayers, previouſly purified, and his mind affected with a ſenſe that he is approaching to ſacred and ancient rites—thus the myſteries become uſeful. Thus we have an

idea

idea that all theſe things were appointed by the ancients for the inſtruction and correction of life.

For the honor of the ſtoics, Hortenſia, it is allowed both by their friends and enemies, that they were zealous aſſertors of a particular providence, and of the omnipreſence of the Deity. That they rejected the idle notion of chance, and the direction of a fate independent of a ſeries of events appointed by the immutable counſels of God, of whoſe moral attributes they were alſo zealous aſſerters. That they inculcated ſentiments of high devotion and ſubmiſſion to the will of the Deity: and that their principles of morality were more conſonant to the purity of the Chriſtian doctrine than that of any other of the philoſophic ſects, and were taught with ſuch ſyſtematic conſiſtence, that they have been the only ſource from which both the ancient and modern moraliſts have drawn all their arguments for the intrinſic value and beauty of virtue, independent of any poſitive rewards attendant on an obedience to the will of God.

It is the ſtoic philoſophy alone, which in any meaſure ſupported the tottering fabric of human virtue, during the general ſcepticiſm on the ſubject of a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments which prevailed in the ages immediately preceding the Chriſtian revelation. And though it would be ridiculous to ſuppoſe that the diſintereſted principles

ciples of ſtoiciſm can have any effect on the frigid ſentiments of a carnal and a ſelfiſh mind, yet their doctrines are ſo wonderfully calculated to inſpire a liberal enthuſiaſm in all thoſe whoſe mental faculties are adapted to receive and cheriſh the ſacred fire, that almoſt every illuſtrious character who figured in the pagan world, were the diſciples of this ſchool. Cleanthes, the diſciple and ſucceſſor of Zeno, uſed to draw water for his livelihood all night, and to ſtudy in the day. He was ſo poor, that for want of materials, he uſed to write down what he had heard from his maſter Zeno, on tiles, and pieces of bone; yet did this man, who had great genius, and conſequently acute feelings, ſupport this painful ſtate of exiſtence with a cheerful ſubmiſſion, which he expreſſed in the following ſtanza:

Conduct me, Jove, and thou, oh Deſtiny!
Wherever your decrees have fixed my ſtation,
I follow cheerfully! and did I not,
Wicked and wretched, I muſt follow ſtill!—

Among the Romans, Cato of Utica, Marcus Brutus, Thraſeus Petus, who ſuffered under the government of Nero, Helvidius Priſcus, who ſuffered under the government of Veſpaſian, the two Antonines, and almoſt every good emperor whoſe conduct helped to ſupport the tottering ſtate of the empire, and to give a breathing time

to the ſubject from the miſeries of a capricious tyranny, were educated in the principles of the ſtoic philoſophy; and it is a doubtful point, whether, admitting the good of externals, though in a ſubordinate degree to the ſupreme good by the academics, was not fatal to the virtue of ſome of their followers, and did not produce a ſlight tarniſh in the otherwiſe complete character of Cicero. For as this illuſtrious Roman regarded what he termed glory, as a good, worthy the conſideration of a wiſe man, it led him to the indulgence of an overweening vanity; which, with ſomewhat too great a warmth of ſentiment for the attainment of offices and honors, appear to be the only alloy in his otherwiſe exalted character.

Among thoſe men whom hiſtory and biography more particularly point out as perſons who have done the higheſt honour to the ſtoic ſchool, Epictetus, one of the moſt accurate and animated teachers of ſtoiciſm, muſt not be forgotten; becauſe he adhered cloſely to the rigid dictates of thoſe principles which he profeſſed, and which he preached to others; and becauſe the adverſe ſituation of life in which he was thrown, afforded him an opportunity of carrying into practice the ſevereſt rules of his philoſophy.

It is reported of Epictetus, that whilſt he was the ſlave of Epaphroditus the freedman and the courtier

courtier of Nero, that his maſter once put his leg to the torture. In this trying ſituation, Epictetus, with great compoſure, and even with a ſmiling countenance, ſaid, "you will certainly break my leg;" and when this had really happened, he added, in the ſame tone of voice, "did not I tell you, that you would break my leg?" It is not improbable that Epictetus might owe his freedom to the remorſe of Epaphroditus, for having treated ſo worthy a character with ſuch inhumanity.—However, the teaching philoſophy in thoſe corrupt times was attended with ſo little emolument, that Epictetus lived in almoſt as great poverty as Cleanthes had done before him; and his whole furniture, whilſt he reſided at Rome, is ſaid to have conſiſted of a bed, a pipkin, and an earthen lamp.

The following diſtich which Epictetus wrote of himſelf, and the following ſentiments found in the fragments which are preſerved of his writings, and annexed to his diſcourſes, contain very beautiful and animated deſcriptions of ſtoicism, ſuch as it was taught and practiſed by the author.

A ſlave, in body maimed, as Irus poor;
Yet to the Gods was Epictetus dear.

"A ſoul converſant with virtue, reſembles perpetual fountain; for it is clear, and gentle, and potable, and ſweet, and communicative, and rich, and harmleſs, and innocent."

The compoſitions of the ſtoics contain ſuch excellent rules of ſelf government, and of ſocial behaviour, with ſuch a pious reliance on the aid and protection of heaven, and of a perfect reſignation and ſubmiſſion to the divine will, that they may be rendered very uſeful to enable us to carry into practice the commands of the goſpel. For without the proper method of diſciplining the mind, both reaſon and faith are vain. It is a juſt obſervation of Mr. Locke, that the preſent ſtrong deſire of enjoyment, will too often be attended to, in preference to any view of diſtant good; ſo when the animal ſpirits are once put into violent motion by any impreſſion hoſtile to our virtue, we ſhall have reaſon to lament, with the poet, the feeble power we receive, either from the principles of faith or reaſon.

> Who, if ſhe lend not arms as well as rules,
> What does ſhe more than tell us we are fools;
> Teach us to mourn our follies, not to mend;
> A ſharp accuſer, but a helpleſs friend.

The defects, Hortenſia, which are to be found in the doctrine of the ſtoics, proceed from their conſidering the infirm and dependent creature, man, in the light of a ſelf ſufficient independent being. But this, as has already been obſerved, neceſſarily followed the building their ſyſtem on the principles of the perſonal mortality of the ſoul; and theſe defects plainly ſhow the impracticability of eſtabliſhing any ſound ſyſtem of religion and morals, but on thoſe prin-

principles that are conſonant to the enlightened reaſon of man, and which form thoſe of the Chriſtian religion, viz. an abſtract fitneſs of things, the unlimited power, wiſdom, and goodneſs of God, and a future ſtate of reward and puniſhment.

LETTER XIII.

The Queſtions of Free-will and Neceſſity, involved in the Study of the human Mind—Statement of the Opinions entertained by the Free-Willers.

THERE is a negative kind of virtue, Hortenſia, that more properly may be termed innocence, which owes its origin to the ſlow motion of the animal ſpirits. Perſons of this temperature having ever an imagination too frigid to excite thoſe ſtrong deſires which lead the captive mind into ſinful volitions. There is another kind of virtue ariſing from that equal balance of the paſſions, which leaves the judgment freedom to act, and determines the will to thoſe parts of conduct which are the moſt correſpondent to the intereſt of the agent. This paſſes in the eyes of men for the higheſt virtue, but it falls far ſhort of that ſublime goodneſs which, though not deficient of the energies of paſſion, is alone directed by the rules of religious and moral duty, and which is warmed by the benevolent feelings of a ſympathiſing heart.

Such perſons, though conſtituted to riſe to the ſublimeſt heights of human conduct, are liable by the

the effects of a bad education, and other circumſtances of fortune unfavourable to virtue, to fall into the loweſt degree of depravity. I have noticed in my obſervations on education, that it is the vigorous mind which particularly requires the watchful care of the tutor, and that peculiar inſtruction which, whilſt it conveys an enlarged knowledge of the nature and extent of our moral and religious duties, affords information on the powers given us by God for the performance of the duty he enjoins. For without a juſt inſight into the mechaniſm of the human mind, and the proper exertion of its various faculties, we can never gain that empire over the appetites and paſſions, that is neceſſary to reſiſt the force of all thoſe various objects of deſire which the ardent mind frames from the perception of ſenſe.

In the ſtudy of mental mechaniſm, is neceſſarily involved the important queſtions of free-will and neceſſity. On this account, an inquiry into this arcanum of nature, ought to form a chief part of the ſtudy of thoſe who have leiſure for any kind of philoſophical ſpeculation. I am well enough acquainted with your diſpoſition, Hortenſia, to aſſure myſelf, that you will be pleaſed with my attempts to inveſtigate a ſubject which has ſo long puzzled the wit and learning of the ſage, and which is ſtill a matter of the warmeſt conteſt in literary diſpute.

Phyſical neceſſity in man, is conſidered as a neceſſity impoſed on the will by the power of a divine impulſe; or proceeding from the negation of ſuch a ſtrength in the faculties and power of the human mind, as are neceſſary to oppoſe the force of that deſire and averſion which ariſes from the continual action of corporeal or mental cauſes. Moral neceſſity is, that neceſſity which ariſes from the irreſiſtable force the underſtanding has on volition, by its diſcriminations on the nature of thoſe objects of choice which preſent themſelves to the mind, as to its conceptions of good and evil.

Thoſe who argue for a perfect freedom of although they allow that no volition is directed by the underſtanding, premiſe, that when any good is propoſed to the mind which is not the chief good, the will can ſuſpend the action, and command the underſtanding to propoſe ſome other object of volition, or the ſame under ſome other appearance. This may always be done, ſince every thing but the chief good is of ſuch a nature, that the underſtanding may apprehend ſome reſpect or relation, wherein it is incommodious; notwithſtanding, therefore ſay they, the will always does follow ſome judgment of the underſtanding, which is made about the ſubſequent action; yet it is not neceſſarily determined by any, for it can ſuſpend its actions, and ſo it is not only free from compulſion, but alſo indifferent in itſelf

itſelf with regard to its actions, and determines without neceſſity.

All the principles of a phyſical neceſſity are ſo repugnant to every idea of human virtue, and ſo contrary to the whole courſe of experience, that except in ſome caſes, where divine grace is ſuppoſed to operate with an irreſiſtable impulſe, it is not at preſent to be found either in the philoſophic or the vulgar creed. But on the ſecond queſtion, I muſt obſerve to you, that moral neceſſity had the misfortune to be offered to the conſideration of the literary world by men, whoſe apparent attempts to deſtroy the principles of virtue, and a rational faith in the promiſes of the goſpel, rendered them very ſuſpicious guides to truth, and gave an additional weight to thoſe prejudices which are ever entertained againſt novel doctrines. Had Hobbes never publiſhed his miſchievous opinions on religion and politics, the famous Dr. Clarke had perhaps never drawn his pen againſt the no leſs famous Leibnitz. But without ſtopping here to make any comments on the doctrine of a moral neceſſity, I ſhall obſerve on the third queſtion, concerning a freedom of will directed by the underſtanding, that to be directed and to command, is an expreſs contradiction in terms; and that if the will is a diſcriminating power, there is no need of ſuch a faculty as the underſtanding. But if the underſtanding is the only power in the mind

mind of man, that diſcriminates on the various diſtinctions which have their place in the nature of things, and that the will is directed by ſuch diſcriminations, the underſtanding muſt have a proper force over volition. For though the will may have a power of ſuſpending action, and of obliging the underſtanding to make more accurate diſcriminations, yet if the laſt judgment paſſed by the underſtanding, is the cauſe of volition, the will cannot be ſaid to determine itſelf independent of the neceſſity to which it muſt be ſubject from ſuch judgment. But before we proceed to any further condemnation of the opinions of the free willers, let us enter more largely into thoſe principles of ſpeculation on which the doctrine of liberty is founded. The will, ſay the free willers, is in every intelligent being a kind of predominant appetite, which is gratified in the ſimple enjoyment of choice, and has within itſelf every power and means of gratification independent of any external cauſe ariſing from ſentiments of deſire and averſion, and which, by a kind of enchantment, can give to every object of choice a principle of pleaſure. The will is the ſole unlimited principle of agency in all intelligent beings—the counſels of the Divine Being are under its predominant controul—and the nature of good and evil, receive their eſſential qualities from their conformity or diſcordancy to the will of God.

It

It is evident alſo, that the divine volitions are accompanied by goodneſs and wiſdom, but it proceeds immediately from his will that things pleaſe God, or are good; for many things are not agreeable to his wiſdom and goodneſs, purely becauſe he did not will them; and while he does not will any thing, it cannot be good.

As the free willers have been ſomewhat puzzled to ſhew for what reaſons, and on what grounds infinite wiſdom ſhould beſtow ſo dangerous a faculty on a finite and imperfect creature whoſe dependant ſtate muſt be neceſſarily expoſed to great ſufferings from blind and erroneous elections, they have taken great pains to repreſent free will, with all its concomitants evils, as a gift worthy the Deity to beſtow; and as they are obliged to allow, that the abuſed power of election muſt in the nature of things be productive of univerſal ill conſequences, they ſometimes qualify this conceſſion, by pleading the utility of vice as perfectly harmonizing with the good of the whole ſyſtem, and as perfectly concordant with that middle ſtate in which man is placed, and the inferiority of his character to the excellence of other intellectual beings.

LETTER XIV.

Obſervations on the Opinions of the Free Willers—Moral Neceſſity defended.

SUCH, Hortenſia, are thoſe principles of ſpeculation on which the doctrine of a free will is founded. But I dare ſay you will agree with me, that the ſubjecting the counſels of God to the mere power and the predominancy of will, unreſtrained and undirected by the unerring guidance of infinite wiſdom, is very derogatory to the honor of thoſe counſels, and to the honor of the divine character. Nor is it mending the matter to allow, that wiſdom is exerciſed in the aſſortment and regulation of things in ſuch a manner as ſhall beſt correſpond with the firſt choice; becauſe if we eſtabliſh an indifference in the nature of principles, and an independency of will to every motive without itſelf, the firſt choice muſt have taken its riſe from chance, a principle which cannot be admitted to have any exiſtence in the divine conduct. For were it chance alone, to whom his creatures are indebted for all the good they enjoy at preſent, and all which may be in ſtore for them in future, it might have happened, that out of the variety of caſualties

caſualties which have a being in chance, if one of the adverſe kind had affected the lot of created beings, all things might have been made for miſery inſtead of good. On theſe grounds of reaſoning, to aver that the divine volitions on the ſyſtem of creation are accompanied with wiſdom and goodneſs, is advancing an abſurdity; for in what manner can wiſdom and goodneſs be directed in the choice of things, which are in themſelves indifferent?

Farther,—to aver that God is pleaſed with his will, independent of any good in the objects of volition, is to lower him beneath the wiſer part of the human ſpecies. And as we ſee men continually change their will, there is on this ground of reaſoning, no ſecurity or aſſurance of that immutability which we all believe to be in God. If things only pleaſe God becauſe he wills them, and if there is annexed a high pleaſure to mere volition, the volition of creating a ſyſtem of things in which there is good, may pleaſe God to-day, and another in which there is no good, may pleaſe him to-morrow. Thus the ſtability of the univerſe may give place to a continual rotation from worſe to better, and from better to worſe; and indeed from the very beſt to the very worſt.

It is ſaid, that if there was not a ſelf moving power in the will, independent of cauſes from

without itſelf, the univerſe could never have had exiſtence from an author ſo abſolutely and completely happy in himſelf, as not to ſtand in the leaſt need of any addition from external things. But this method of arguing degrades the divine attributes of wiſdom and goodneſs into a principle of intereſted action, and deſtroys that principle of reaſoning on which the immutability of God's counſels depend. In him there is no variableneſs nor ſhadow of turning—and the reaſon is plain, for through all the wide extent of poſſible differences, there can be but one beſt; and that one beſt will be perceived by infinite intelligence, and become the permanent election of infinite wiſdom. The ſubjection to this neceſſity, is the peculiar glory of the divine character. And as the nature of that abſolute freedom which is contended for, were it a poſſible quality, would reflect diſgrace on every rational agent who poſſeſſed it, ſo the nearer approaches which all finite creatures make to the perfections of their creator, the more they will be brought under the bleſſed ſubjection of being neceſſarily determined in their volitions by right principles of conduct. On the propoſition that God has communicated an abſolute freedom of will to man, it may be maintained on the ſoundeſt principles of reaſoning, that when the volitions of God had ſo far taken place, as to introduce into the ſyſtem of

the univerſe a ſenſitive rational agent, the Creator could not, without depriving this agent of every principle on which his rational agency was founded, ſo far deceive his ſenſitive and intellectual powers, as to prevent his diſtinguiſhing the difference which lies in the nature of things. The perception of this difference is neceſſarily annexed to the quality of reaſon; and man, were he deprived of this perception, muſt be deprived of the quality to which it is annexed. Now the perception which the human mind has of the eſſential difference which lies in the nature of things, will direct it to prize ſome objects as good, and others to regard as evil; and this will lead it to look on one object with deſire, and the other with averſion; which muſt totally remove that indifference from volition, on which the doctrine of an abſolute freedom of will reſts.

It may be granted, that had God thought proper, he might have acted phyſically on man, and made him either neceſſarily moral, or neceſſarily immoral; but when he beſtowed on him the privilege of a free agent, under the guidance of reaſon, he neceſſarily expoſed the conduct of that agency to the errors which ariſe from an ill informed underſtanding, or an underſtanding miſchievouſly affected by the ſtrength of thoſe appetites, and the impulſes of thoſe paſſions proceeding from the various

various corporeal and mental qualities which exiſt in the human frame.

The free-willers agree with the neceſſarians in the opinion, that the mind perceives the difference of things, and forms her volitions on theſe perceptions. If not, why have we ſchools to train our youth in knowledge, and in habits of virtue? why are treatiſes written and encouraged, which are adapted to inform the underſtanding in ſuch a manner, as ſhall enable her to be a proper guide to the will? why are puniſhments annexed to the tranſgreſſion of laws, but to ſerve as motives to correct the miſchief of depraved volitions? why are our youth warned to fly from the ſnares of temptation, and to arm their reaſon againſt the power of their appetites and paſſions, by ſtrengthening the one with intellectual nouriſhment, and by ſtarving the growth of the other by moderation and forbearance? and why does the divine repreſent this life as unfavourable to virtue, on account of the hoſtile impulſes which proceed from the objects that ſurround us?

In favour of the notion, that volitions are made independent of, and in contradiction to, the diſtinctions which the mind is ſuppoſed to frame of good, a variety of whimſical volitions are enumerated. But ſuch diſtinctions may take place in volition, though they are too trifling to be obſerved. Of two eggs which are ſerved up to a perſon,

perſon, there can never be ſuch a parity in all their circumſtances, as not to induce a choice either from ſize, colour, or ſituation; and when a man is to chuſe a walk in a garden, though his imagination ſhould not be affected ſo ſtrongly as to create a warm preference in his mind, yet it is always ſome circumſtance of length, breadth, vicinity, ſurface, or ſociality which determines his choice. It is indeed ſo unnatural to make any volition without a very obvious motive, that when objects are preſented to the mind, void of thoſe allurements neceſſary to remove frigidity of ſentiment, a painful conteſt enſues between the neceſſity of making a choice, and the averſion of the mind to put the will in action. In all probability, it is the frigidity of ſentiment alone which prevents the inattentive mind from noticing the prevailing motive; but be this as it may, ſuch a reluctance ſhows, that the mere pleaſure of willing has no charms for a rational agent. And even ſuppoſing that in ſome very peculiar ſituations, a preſſing neceſſity may force volitions where objects are indifferent, this can never render all objects indifferent, and deſtroy the nature of all diſtinction; nor will it follow, that if volitions are capable of taking place from neceſſity, without other motive but the neceſſity itſelf, that volitions can take place in oppoſition to the power of all motives.

But it is ſaid, that volitions are made in contradiction to the power of all motives, contrary to every colour of intereſt, to the natural love of life, the natural dread of pain, or the importunate calls of appetite. Very extraordinary volitions of theſe kinds have undoubtedly been made by ſome of the diſciples of the ſtoic ſchool; but it is known, that the rational intereſt which the ſtoics annexed to ſuch exerciſes of fortitude and ſelf denial, did not ariſe from the mere ſatisfaction of the enjoyment of choice, but in the conſciouſneſs of having made a good one—one that was perfectly agreeable to the obligations of a rational agent, which were to be determined always by the moral fitneſs of things. Such determinations are conſtrued by the ſtoics to be a proper accordment of their volitions to the will of the Deity. And they argue, that in proportion as we exert the energetic powers of the mind in the conteſt between reaſon and the force of appetites and paſſions, that is, the greater the difficulties the mind has ſubdued, the greater will be our ſatisfaction. They do not therefore place the rational intereſt in the exerting the power of will, but in the having exerted this power by the impulſe of the beſt motives, and in the conſequences which follow the having made the beſt choice, viz. that the actions which proceed from ſuch volitions produce good habits—That good habits firſt produce eaſe, then pleaſure; and that this pleaſure is

accompanied

accompanied with an infinite variety of different modes of good, which attend the habitual courſe of proper actions. Thus the volitions that naturally proceed from all theſe cauſes, in conformity to the firſt beſt choice, encourages, invigorates, and illuminates the mind in ſuch a manner as to produce conviction of the importance of the victory.

LETTER XV.

Farther Arguments in Favor of Moral Neceſſity.

ERROR, ignorance, negligence, levity, the giving too great an indulgence to the exercise of election, contracted habits, and the appetites implanted in us by Nature, are allowed by the free willers to be the cauſes by which the mind falls into undue elections.

Theſe conceſſions appear to me, Hortenſia, to lay the foundation for the overthrow of all their principles. For from whence can proceed error or ignorance, but in the incapacity of making proper diſtinctions on thoſe objects which tend to happineſs or miſery? and where is the room for diſtinction, if all things are indifferent to the creature, but the privilege and power of willing? in what can negligence conſiſt, but in the not attending to the dictates of the underſtanding? and how can there be utility in attending to dictates which have no power of determining? whence comes levity, but from the ſame cauſe? where is the power of contracted habit, if volition is altogether independent of motive? and how can the appetites have any controuling force, if all the ſenſes are in the order of things ſubjected to the dominion of will?

So weak and untenable are all the arguments

for the abſolute liberty of will, that I am perſuaded no man of ſenſe could have been brought to adopt the opinion, had not his mind been highly prejudiced by the formidable objections which have hitherto deterred mankind from a fair inquiry into thoſe principles of motion which impel the volitions of all intelligent beings, and produce correſpondent actions.

Theſe objections are, I believe, all compriſed under the following heads.

Firſt—that the allowing no kind of indifference in the power of volition, takes away that liberty which is neceſſary to conſtitute free agency; and that if free agency is taken away, that principle of action is taken away which conſtitutes the nature of merit and demerit. Thus the agent cannot reaſonably expect any reward for his good actions, nor any puniſhment for his crimes, independent of the conſequences naturally flowing from the nature of the actions themſelves; and therefore all grounds or reaſons for puniſhment and reward in another ſtate of exiſtence are taken away, or God muſt be ſuppoſed to act partially and unreaſonably in the diſtribution of them.

Secondly—that in the doctrine of impelling cauſes, all actions muſt in metaphyſical reaſoning be traced upwards, till they reſt in the ſource of all motion, the Deity—becauſe in the regular concatenation of cauſe and effect, all proceeding cauſes

muſt take their being as effects from the exiſtence of firſt cauſes; therefore this is making God the author of ſin.

Thirdly—That as no poſitive rewards and puniſhments can in the reaſon of things be juſtly given or inflicted on agents who are not free, by him who is the original diſpenſer of good and evil to his creatures, ſo neither can they be juſtly given or inflicted by man reſpecting his fellow creatures. Thus the coercion of law will have no ground in juſtice, puniſhments will become cruelties, rewards will be partialities, and praiſe and diſpraiſe childiſh and puerile expreſſions of human ſentiment.

Fourthly—That if the doctrine of moral neceſſity ſhould meet with the univerſal aſſent of mankind, and be entertained as a principle of rational belief, it would weaken the ſentiment of religion by degrading the character of the Deity; and it would relax the attention of mankind to a rational intereſt, by inducing an opinion that all creatures are chained to the foot of fate, and have it not in their power to make their own fortunes, or to meliorate or aggravate the evils of a predetermined deſtiny.

Fifthly—That by introducing a negation of all merit and demerit, the pleaſing ſenſe of ſelf approbation will be taken away, and with it the more uſeful ſenſe of remorſe and ſhame, thoſe ſtrong incentives to repentance and amendment.

The

The firſt objection, Hortenſia, which ſuppoſes, that ſuch a principle of election could have been eſtabliſhed, and ſuch a power could have been given by God to rational agents, as is in any ſenſe independent of motives, militates againſt every rational conception of moral agency, and implies one of thoſe manifeſt contradictions which form the only neceſſary limitations to the power of God. Intelligence and wiſdom are attributes as inſeparable from the firſt cauſe, as is the phyſical neceſſity of exiſtence. It is the peculiar nature of intelligence to diſcern all the agreements and diſagreements which neceſſarily exiſt in the nature of things; and of wiſdom to be determined by the neceſſary ſuperiority which is inſeparable from that which is beſt, over that which is not equally good. Thus we perceive a neceſſity, inſeparable to perfect intelligence and wiſdom. As I have elſewhere obſerved to you, when the volitions of God had ſo far taken place as to introduce into the ſyſtem of the univerſe a rational agent, this rational agent, from the nature of rationality, muſt have been endued with the power of perceiving the agreement and diſagreement of thoſe ideas which lie within the compaſs of his perceptive qualities. In our further inveſtigation, we ſhall find, that the perception of the agreement and diſagreement of things, ſubjects the rational principle to the neceſſity of making a determination in favour of that which

it perceives to be ſuperior over what it perceives to be inferior; and this determination of the rational principle muſt determine the volition of a rational agent. Thus we ſee, that God, in the ſame extent as he gave the privilege of reaſon, and allowed to this privilege its free courſe, neceſſarily ſubjected the volitions of the creature, to the neceſſity of being determined by that which the rational principle perceived to be the beſt.

If a larger portion of reaſon had been given, a more accurate ſagacity would have taken place in the determinations of the agent, and this would neceſſarily have ſubjected his volitions to the neceſſity of the beſt choice; eſpecially if no hoſtile motives of determination had ariſen from the impulſes of paſſion, and the powerful cravings of appetite. But the appetites and the paſſions are ſuch uſeful incentives to action in the frame of human mechaniſm, that they appear to be a neceſſary part of the conſtitution of ſuch a being as man. They are alſo neceſſary to the trial, and the very exiſtence of meritorious virtue. For if man is placed on this terreſtrial globe, as in a nurſery, aptly fitted to give ſtrength, vigour, and maturity to his young and infirm reaſon; if he be placed on this terreſtrial globe as in a ſchool, adapted to the advantages of a practical experience; if he is ſurrounded with difficulties, dangers, and hoſtile powers, for the purpoſes of enlarging

larging his experience, and inducing a trial of that virtue which his reaſon enables him to acquire, we ſhall have cauſe to admire the wiſdom and the goodneſs of God, for beſtowing on man the privilege of a rational agency; though at the ſame time he expoſed his conduct to the errors of an ill informed underſtanding, or an underſtanding miſchievouſly affected by the ſtrength of appetite, and the impulſe of paſſion.

The nature of merit and demerit, as theſe differences take place in the relation of man to man, conſiſts in the good or the evil which ariſes to ſociety or to private perſons, from the conduct of the ſeveral individuals of this ſpecies. But the nature of merit and demerit in human conduct, when conſidered in the relation of the creature to the Creator, ariſes from another ſource of moral difference.

As all good gifts are derived from God, and conſequently all the original powers neceſſary to form excellence, the nature of merit, as it exiſts in the conduct of man, when conſidered in his relation to the Creator, takes its riſe from that degree of natural and acquired excellence, which enables him to partake of thoſe bleſſings that attend his progreſs in virtue through every ſtage of his exiſtence. Demerit therefore, in this relation, muſt ariſe from ſuch a depraved uſe of the creature's powers, as diſables him from partaking of the happy conſequences which accompany the pro-

progreſs of virtue. And as the perfect benevolence of God will not ſuffer any of his creatures to ſink into an eternal abyſs of depravity and corruption, he has cauſed puniſhment to be neceſſarily annexed to a flagitious conduct, and to ariſe out of the natural conſequences which attend a depraved volition, and its correſpondent action.

Certainly, Hortenſia, ſevere and poſitive puniſhments muſt have been inflicted on man, as ſharp, though uſeful correctives, to awaken the dormant energies of the abuſed faculties, to revive the powers of depraved reaſon, to recover all the principles of moral conduct, and to give ſtability to regained virtue, by that ſtrong conviction which experience can alone afford.

On this view of the ſubject we ſhall ſurely find reaſonable grounds for the evils which attend erroneous and ſinful volitions through this warfare of life; and alſo for the rewards and the more poſitive puniſhments of another ſtate, which are ſo awfully announced in the revelations of God to man.

But let us try how the principle of merit and demerit, and the reaſonable grounds for reward and puniſhment, will ſtand on an abſolute indifference to the power of motives. Let us ſuppoſe, that volitions are made independent of every external motive; will the privilege of ſuch a faculty be capable of creating that difference in the principles of conduct, which ſquare with our ideas

ideas of merit and demerit. One creature wills and acts agreeable to the dictates of virtue and the commands of God; the volitions and the actions of another are quite contrary to such dictates and commands, yet both of these creatures acted with an equal indifference to the power of motives; therefore there can be neither merit in the one agent, nor demerit in the other. And as this self moving power of the will must always be supposed to possess its indifference to the power of motives, the one agent cannot be more advanced in that perfection which insures the stability of virtue, than the other.

Where can be the use, or the rapturous pleasure which arises from the improvement of intellect, and the acquirement of good habits? where can be the transcendant enjoyments which are annexed to the practice and enlargement of virtue, if its excellence is not of that superior kind to command, and to controul volition? for if the perverse nature of this faculty should always remain cold and indifferent to the superiority of every kind of excellence, the virtue and the happiness of a good agent will continue to be as precarious in another state of existence, as in this, unless some wholesome restraint is put on so mischievous a faculty; and in such a case, according to the idea which has been formed of moral necessity, there is an end of merit.

It will be ſaid, that the merit of a good agent lies in having formed all his volitions to the dictates of virtue and the commands of God. But if the virtuous volitions of this good agent did not ariſe from the power of fate, or chance, it muſt have been ſome act of the underſtanding which pointed out to him the beauty and the propriety which lie in virtue and obedience; it muſt have been the ſuperior excellence of theſe qualities which attracted his imagination, warmed the affections of his heart, and produced in him the full conviction, that his rational intereſt was all centered in his obedience. If this ſhould be the caſe, how can ſuch an agent be ſaid to have acted independent of motives? if it ſhould not have been the caſe, how can he be ſaid to have acted on any other principle but chance? or how can he have any pretenſions to merit by ſuch an obedience?

It will alſo be ſaid, that the demerit of a free agent ariſes from his having uſed the ſelf moving power of the will in oppoſition to divine authority, and that his volitions have been framed and proſecuted in a direct oppoſition to the dictates of virtue, and the commands of God. But is it not probable that the underſtanding of this agent was deficient in its duty, in pointing out to him his rational intereſt; and that beauty and propriety in intellectual qualities which would have commanded the aſſent of the mind; and if the underſtanding

ing was deficient in its duty, did not the deficiency ariſe from ſome defect in its natural powers; or from theſe powers having been overborne and over-ruled by certain hoſtile impreſſions, that affecting his whole mind, weakened and depraved all its faculties? If theſe cauſes ſhould be allowed to be of that commanding force as to have over-ruled all the dictates of his underſtanding, and forced by their effects an unnatural aſſent from the mind, then it muſt be allowed that he did not altogether act independent of motives. But if he did act altogether independent of motives, he muſt have acted on the principle of chance; and in this caſe no grounds of demerit can be eſtabliſhed.

It remains yet to be conſidered, whether the beſtowing the faculty of free will does afford more reaſonable, or as reaſonable grounds for puniſhment in a future ſtate, as the doctrine of neceſſity. Puniſhment, however ſharp and terrible, when uſed as a corrective, completely ſquares with human ideas of perfect benevolence and wiſdom. But let thoſe who allow that theſe glorious attributes are inherent in the divine character, reconcile in a ſatisfactory manner to ſuch attributes, the inflicting infinite puniſhment on finite tranſgreſſions; and this, on a principle of juſtice, ariſing from the abuſe of a faculty, which in the nature of things it is impoſſible for an imperfect being not to abuſe. One of the moſt popular objections which

which lie againſt the doctrine of moral neceſſity is, that it cannot admit of infinite puniſhment; but the ſame objection will, on a candid view of the queſtion, be found to lie againſt the doctrine of philoſophical liberty.

This is ſo apparent, that infinite puniſhment ſeems to be given up by the diſputants on either ſide of the queſtion, and to be conſidered as a figurative image of long and inexpreſſible ſufferings. Indeed the admitting ſuch an eternity of torments, as is contended for by ſome religioniſts, inſtead of ſerving as a wholeſome corrective to the natural incentives to vice, fills the mind with a horror which obliges it to turn from ſuch a ſubject of contemplation; and it is ſo repugnant to all the ſentiments of the ſpecies, that it either deprives men of their reaſon, or leads thoſe who are incapable of forming any ſyſtem of belief for themſelves, to conclude, that they have been deluded with groundleſs terror, and thus to fall into a ſcepticiſm ſo entirely oppoſite to a religious fear, as even to reject all notions of a future ſtate of retribution.

LETTER

LETTER XVI.

The ſame ſubject continued.

THE very popular objection, Hortenſia, to the doctrine of moral neceſſity, contained in the following propoſition, "that it is making God the author of ſin," is an objection, that in one ſenſe or another of this affirmation, can never be removed out of any theological ſyſtem which takes in the conſideration of evil.

Should the bare admittance of moral evil be conſidered in the light of making God the author of ſin, he certainly muſt appear to be equally ſo on the one principle as on the other. For when the ſubject is traced up to firſt cauſes, and the attribute of preſcience is admitted to be inherent in the Deity, it will be found, that the original cauſe of ſin lies on the one ſide, in the giving the creature man a privilege which God ſaw by his preſcience muſt be abuſed; and on the other, by not adjuſting motives to the qualities of the creatures in ſuch a manner as ſhould prevent moral turpitude. But as the diſputants on both ſides the queſtion very properly agree in this point, "that evil is admitted to induce good," it will be found on a

thorough and fair inveſtigation of the nature and extent of this good, that the advantages of the argument lie all on the ſide of moral neceſſity. For the one muſt admit of the ſacrifice of individuals for the good of the whole; and the other extends the benevolence of the munificent father of the univerſe to every one of his creatures. It extends it in a general, and in a particular ſenſe; and inſtead of adopting that trite obſervation, "partial evil is univerſal good," it contends, that the Lord and giver of all good gifts, to whoſe omnipotence every difficulty gives way, has ſo benignly and ſo wiſely arranged the eſtabliſhed laws of nature, with every circumſtance of his providential government, and the concatenation of cauſe and effect, that they ſhall in ſome meaſure, and in ſome given time, produce an individual as well as a general happineſs.

But to do juſtice to this intereſting ſubject, let us enter into a more particular inveſtigation, and ſee whether the adjuſting motives to the qualities of the creature, in ſuch a manner as ſhould prevent moral turpitude, would ſo well anſwer the end of the greateſt, general, and individual happineſs, as in the arrangements which are at preſent found in the ordinary courſe of providence.

In the proper conſideration of the ſubject, we are never to loſe ſight of theſe propoſitions.—Firſt, that man is placed on this terreſtrial globe, as

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in a nurſery, aptly fitted to give ſtrength and vigour to his young and infirm reaſon. Secondly, that he is placed in this world as in a ſchool, adapted to the advantages of a practical experience. And, thirdly, that he is ſurrounded with difficulties and hoſtile powers, for the purpoſe of enlarging his experience and inducing a trial of that virtue which his reaſon has enabled him to acquire.

The reaſonableneſs of theſe propoſitions is ſo obvious, that they have been allowed by all the teachers of divinity, and make a part of the orthodox faith. If they are granted to be true, in what manner could their predicates be effected, if man was not placed in a ſituation where the prevalent motive for volition might often be the worſt motive?

If motives were adjuſted in ſuch a manner to the mental and corporeal qualities of man, that he could never he tempted to ſin, he could have no experience of the advantages which lie on the ſide of virtue, when conſidered with its oppoſite principle, vice. Some parts of juſtice, a general benevolence, temperance, and a patience under the natural evil of ſickneſs and the loſs of friends, are the only virtues which could be practiſed in ſuch a ſituation. But the more difficult and more exalted virtues of charity, in the beſt and moſt extenſive ſenſe of the word, with that high fortitude which ſupports itſelf when aſſailed by the

blended miſeries which flow from the united ſources of moral and natural evil, could have no place among the virtues of the human ſpecies. Neither could the more meritorious virtue of ſelf devotedneſs to the will of the Deity, be exerted; and this, when calamities flow in with ſuch an overwhelming tide of woe, as to overpower the dim light of reaſon, and weaken the comfort of thoſe hopes which are formed in the hour of a cooler judgment. It is at this time, that the prevailing influence of religious ſentiment, diſplays it power and efficacy in ſuch a manner as to produce the exertion of as high a virtue as perhaps a finite being is capable of diſplaying. Such exertions more particularly frame our minds for taſting the happineſs of a future ſtate, which, without the experience of evil in this world, would loſe much of its tranſcendant bleſſedneſs. Neither could the creature, man, for want of ſuch a due experience, attain the proper capacity for filling a ſuperior ſtation in the univerſe.

The doctrine of a moral neceſſity, Hortenſia, does not admit of ſuch a negation of ſtrength in the faculties of the mind, as are neceſſary to oppoſe the force of that deſire and averſion which ariſes from the continual action of corporeal and mental cauſes. No; the defenders of this doctrine, whilſt they aſſert that man has not a power

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of ſuſpending volition, allow that he has the power of ſuſpending the motion of a correſpondent action till he has taken into due conſideration the good or the bad which may exiſt in the object of volition. They allow, that when the mind of a man is free from the over-ruling power of certain fixed aſſociation of ideas, he can chuſe one ſubject of contemplation, and diſcard another. They allow, that when an aſſociation of ideas, unfriendly to his virtue, is not fixed in his mind by an imprudent indulgence, or by repeated impreſſions, they may be either diſcarded, or new and more friendly aſſociations may be called forth from the ſtore-houſe of the brain. They allow, that a conſtant diſcipline of the mind, and a due exertion of its powers, with habitudes of virtue, will keep the paſſions and appetites under ſuch a due ſubjection, as to give to the beſt motives the neceſſary power to impel the beſt volitions. But when they have made theſe conceſſions, they go no farther; nor have they the want of candour to deny, that a bad diſpoſition, a bad education, early acquired habits of the unfavourable kind, ſtrong paſſions, pampered appetites, inattention to a rational intereſt, and above all an ignorance in the art of diſciplining the mind, do all of them act with ſuch a prevalent hoſtility againſt the virtue of mankind, as often to create a neceſſity for perverſe volitions

and correſpondent actions. It is on theſe grounds of reaſoning, that the teachers of the doctrine of a moral neceſſity, endeavour to convince mankind of the reality of this principle, and to explain the nature of its action, in order to give to men ſuch lights on the ſubject of their true intereſt, as may enable them to form proper ſyſtems of mental diſcipline, and to guard againſt the dangers ariſing from an over confidence, or an inattentive negligence.

By the explanation of thoſe different circumſtances in the courſe of human life, which give riſe to the two oppoſite neceſſities of doing good, or doing evil, it will appear, that bad governors, bad parents, bad tutors, and bad company, are the primary authors of all the evil volitions of the ſpecies; and that ignorance is a ſoil in which no uniform virtue can take root and flouriſh. It will alſo appear by the invariable experience of mankind, that theſe cauſes muſt be allowed to be as hoſtile in their operations againſt the peace and virtue of mankind on the principle of philoſophical liberty, as on the principle of philoſophical neceſſity. For will any of the abettors of this doctrine ſay, that a child born of wicked parents, and who has never been taught the proper diſtinctions between virtue and vice, and their influences on the rational intereſt of the

ſpecies,

ſpecies, who has alſo kept bad company, and acquired bad habits from its early infancy, can be in ſo likely a way of attaining to the perfection of virtue as one born of good parents, well educated, and whoſe converſation has been among people from whom he has received the beſt impreſſions? If this is allowed, then it muſt be alſo allowed, that cauſes of this nature affect the virtue of mankind on every principle of volition. For the free-willer muſt give up the point, when he is obliged to acknowledge any power in precept, example, and habit, over volition. To talk of degrees of temptation, or degrees of influence, is really talking nonſenſe; becauſe if the power of will is ſuperior to motive, it is ſuperior to every temptation. The quantum of ſuperiority has nothing to do with the argument; for ever ſo ſmall an advantage in the balance, will weigh down one hundred pounds weight as eaſily as a feather; and if there is implanted in us ſuch a knowledge of right and wrong as is ſufficient to reſiſt the influence of a bad education, it muſt be as much in the power of the child of illiterate and profligate parents to act in all the important duties of morality, as in the power of one whoſe education has been the beſt adapted to enlighten and improve his underſtanding. As the experience and practice of mankind will not ſuffer them to deny the power of education and habit, let us examine, on the au-

thority of this conceſſion, which of the two opinions, philoſophical liberty, or moral neceſſity, ſuppoſing them to produce their natural conduct, is the moſt ſalutary for mankind to entertain. Let us ſuppoſe the caſe of a parent, or tutor, who has adopted the doctrine of a philoſophical liberty, and who has entertained the notion, that the will has a ſelf-moving power, independent of all external motives. Such a perſon, if he is reaſonably actuated by the principle of the opinion he has adopted, will read his pupil many lectures on the ill conſequences which attend depraved and vicious elections. But as he does not allow any neceſſity to ariſe from the impelling force of external motives, he muſt always inſiſt on ſuch an independent ſelf-moving power in the will, as is ſuperior to every motive. A pupil thus deceived in that part of truth, in which it is moſt his intereſt to be well inſtructed, and inſtead of being taught where his ſtrength really lies, is perſuaded into an opinion, that he has a ſtrength where he has none, will be liable to an equally miſchievous miſtake as the famous knight of la Mancha made, when he took the barber's baſon for Mambrino's helmet; and like this poor knight, filled with the idea of the poſſeſſion of a certain magical ſtrength, or armour of defence, he will be foiled in the firſt fierce encounter with a potent enemy. If he ſhould eſcape unhurt, the cir-

cumſtance

cumſtance may have ariſen from ſome accidental incident which, he not perceiving, will give the whole merit of his eſcape to the magic power of the helmet. Thus confirmed in this erroneous opinion, he will provoke, or at leaſt forbear to fly the attack of his enemies, till he experiences as cruel, and as miſchievous effects produced in the whole œconomy of his mental frame, as this poor knight experienced of bodily wounds and bruiſes.

Yes, Hortenſia, when curioſity prompts, and a propoſed ſatisfaction ſtimulates deſire, we ſhall be very apt, in a full conviction of the power of Mambrino's helmet, to go ſo near the borders of vice, as to find our deſtruction in the flames which iſſue from the hoſtile quarters.

Let us now ſuppoſe the caſe of a tutor, who has adopted the opinion of a neceſſity in the moral ſenſe of the word. This neceſſarian, if he is reaſonably actuated by the opinion he has adopted, will inſtruct his pupil in the nature of thoſe principles on which all the ſources of his ſtrength depend. He will inform him of the invincible prevalence of motives; he will teach him the art of arranging circumſtances in ſuch a manner as ſhall give an inſuperable power to that motive which ſhall produce the beſt volition. He will, like the wiſe Mentor, arm his Telemachus with the defenſive weapons of caution, ſagacity, foreſight, addreſs, and fortitude. He will arm him

with that offenſive one which conſiſts in the power of combating force by force, and of ſubduing one hoſtile motive by the mental arrangement of ſuch motives as are founded in his rational intereſt. He will inſtruct him in the uſe, and accuſtom him to the practice of habits which tend to confirm thoſe qualities in his mind, and thoſe affections which are favourable to wiſe and virtuous volitions. He will teach him to allay the heat of a youthful nature, by introducing into his diſpoſition, and the temper of his mind, an artificial frigidity of ſentiment, that happy medium between apathy and paſſion, rendered natural by long, though forced habits. But above all, he will teach him the advantage of that very neceſſary ſpecies of prudence in this kind of warfare, to fly rather than to attack, and to gain a victory by a retreat. A pupil thus taught and thus inſtructed in the nature of his real ſtrength, the addreſs with which it is to be managed, and the formidableneſs of thoſe enemies which he is to encounter, will avoid every ſpecies of danger which carries an appearance of force ſufficient to affect the ordinary temper of his mind, and his well grounded reſolutions for wiſe and virtuous volitions. And when he is caught unawares, or finds himſelf in ſuch circumſtances as to be obliged to turn about and face the enemy, he will be thoroughly acquainted with the art of arranging his forces,

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and of exerting all the latent powers of his mind in ſuch a method as may beſt enſure a fortunate iſſue to the rencounter.

To throw ſome illuſtrations on theſe figures, let us picture to our imagination, a free-willer, and a neceſſarian reading, in the public papers, that certain licentious prints, or books, are to be expoſed to ſale. The free-willer, full of his imaginary power on the article of volition, indulges his curioſity without heſitation; whilſt the neceſſarian, aware of the danger which attends temerity, and convinced of the full force and power of temptation, with a virtuous caution determines not to indulge a curioſity which, by inflaming his imagination, may give his paſſions a force, which it may not be in his power to repel.

Which of theſe two perſons do you think, Hortenſia, will be in the leaſt danger of a vicious volition? But again, let us ſuppoſe theſe two perſons aſſailed by a very ſtrong temptation; the one tries to put his ſelf-moving power in action, under the guidance of prudence; but in this tremendous moment, his ignorance of the œconomy of the human mind throws him on the mercy of blind chance, or leaves his ſecurity to a providential interpoſition; whilſt the neceſſarian, by a full knowledge of the practical uſe of the faculties of the mind, defends himſelf; and

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in his turn attacks his potent adverſary with all that maſtery in art, which in battles of a different nature has ſecured the victories of a Cæſar or a Marlborough.

LETTER

LETTER XVII.

The ſame Subject continued.

THE objections which have been made againſt rewards and puniſhments in another ſtate, as rationally inadmiſſable into the ſyſtem of neceſſity, I think, Hortenſia, are anſwered by the ſtatement of that inequality in the means of happineſs, which takes its riſe from the progreſs either of virtue or of vice which has been made by moral agents in this ſtate of exiſtence, and from the neceſſary uſe of ſharp puniſhments to correct the miſchiefs which accompany a bad choice.

In regard to the diſpenſation of thoſe puniſhments which ſinful man receives from man, the propriety of ſuch puniſhments takes its riſe from the principles of utility, and even of neceſſity; and its juſtice from the principles of ſelf defence, and the aſſent to ſuch a diſtribution of them as are adjudged by law and coerced by government. Men are ſuppoſed to give up willingly the unprotected rights of Nature for inferior privileges; becauſe ſuch privileges are or ought to be completely ſecured to them by their obedience to government. But both on the principles of liberty and neceſſity,

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in a ſtate of Nature and a ſtate of civil ſociety, there can be no infringement of juſtice in inflicting even the puniſhment of death on an offender whoſe depravity renders him noxious to the ſafety of his fellow creatures. The magiſtrate does not, or at leaſt he ought not to preſume to put himſelf in God's place, as a rigid diſpenſer of rewards and puniſhments on the abſtract ideas annexed to merit and demerit; but being veſted with authority by the free voice of his fellow citizens, he proceeds to inflict ſuch puniſhment on offenders as the mild dictates of humane laws allow. And he thus proceeds on the principles of an utility, ariſing from that moral neceſſity which is contended for; viz. That ſuch puniſhments on delinquency may ſerve as motives in the way of example for the reſtraint of vice. It is eaſy to ſee, that rewards adjudged by laws, authorized by cuſtom, and dealt out by the magiſtrate, are to be juſtified on the ſame principles.

To the laſt article of the third objection to the doctrine of a moral neceſſity, which I have ſtated to you, Hortenſia, "that on ſuch a principle all the praiſes that are beſtowed on virtue, and all the rigorous diſapprobations of vice, will loſe their grounds in juſtice, and become childiſh and puerile expreſſions of human ſentiment."—It may be poſitively aſſerted, that all the laviſh praiſes which are now ſometimes beſtowed on virtuous actions, and thoſe

ſharp and rigorous diſapprobations which ſometimes attend vicious ones, have in general no other ſource, than what may be found in a puerile expreſſion of human ſentiment, nor can they have any other ſource, unleſs ſuch a reformation was to take place in the preſent ſtate of opinion and practice, as would totally baniſh moral evil from ſociety. If the laviſh praiſes which are ſometimes beſtowed on virtuous actions, always attended ſuch actions in every walk and ſituation of life, there might be ſome reaſon to believe that they proceeded from an abſtract conſideration of the worth and value of virtue. But as we find that praiſe takes its meaſure from the extent of the conſequences of virtuous actions, as they are found to affect public and private happineſs, we muſt be convinced that ſuch praiſes flow from the intereſted feelings of human ſentiment—and as they do not ariſe from any abſtract conſiderations of the value of virtue, they are as equally fitted to ſquare with the principles of neceſſity, as with the principles of liberty.

The ſharp and rigorous diſapprobation which men give to ſome ſpecies of vice, alſo takes its riſe from the meaſure and extent of the conſequences which follow criminal actions, as they are ſuppoſed to affect public and private happineſs. But this often flows from the vicious ſources of envy, rancor, revenge, the deſire of levelling great characters,

characters, or of moving an enemy or a rival out of the way, or the desire of exalting ourselves to a comparative excellence by the disparagement of our neighbour. Hence the disapprobation shewn of vicious persons or criminal actions, is never measured by any rule drawn from the abstract consideration of vice, as it stands opposed to virtue on the immutable principle of fitness or unfitness; but as the measure of malevolence or political sentiment prevails, and as the consequences of criminal actions which never are in the power of the agent to command, may in the course of things extend to public or private injury. Thus, if an individual in society commits a criminal action, which by accidental circumstances is not attended with that injury to the public or to private persons as might have been expected, and should he be placed in a situation where neither envy, revenge, rancor, political interest, nor rivalship prevail against him, the diminution of the measure of dispraise which he incurs, will be in exact proportion to the accidental diminution of the injury. A thief and a murtherer rouzes every man's anger; but a bad prince, or a bad minister, or any other person in a public character, whose vices are much more extensively mischievous, often escape free from public resentment. For as lord Bolingbroke observes, the strings of a public interest pull much weaker than the nearer cords

which affect a private concern. Thus, becauſe a public injury is not immediately felt as an individual one, it is never equally reſented; and thus do public vices obtain a freedom from cenſure and reproof. Indeed, if the virtues of a good man are thought inimical to any falſe object of intereſt in the multitude, they will meet with perſecution rather than praiſe. It is true, that mens' reſentment at vice is ſometimes heigthened by the power of ſympathy in very flagrant actions of cruelty or injuſtice. But in vulgar minds, the reſentment takes its riſe from a ſenſe of private injury. Thus, if a perſon whoſe powerful ſituation in life ſecures to him a capability of ſkreening himſelf from legal puniſhment, or the infamy of a public ſentence, and alſo a capability of extending benefits as well as injuries, he may go on multiplying offence upon offence, without ſuffering much from the reprehenſion of his fellow citizens. And as a knave in the pillory, experiences a very different treatment to that which is experienced by the knave in ermine; we may venture to aſſert, that it is misfortune and ſituation alone which gives to diſpraiſe its meaſure and its ſtrength. That it is a mere human ſentiment founded in intereſt, and that it agrees as well with the principles of moral neceſſity, as with the principles of liberty. There is no danger that the conviction of a moral neceſſity ſhould incline men to an ex-

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ceſs of indulgence to the frailties of their neighbours, for is it not common to ſee people expreſs reſentment even againſt inanimate beings, which have been injurious to them in any manner; and is it not more common to ſee them deſtroy with the appearance of a malevolent feeling, animals, who are by the law of their nature rendered noxious to them? and can it be ſuppoſed, that the moſt ignorant of the human race act thus on the belief of any criminal demerit in theſe inanimate and animated beings? But, ſay the free-willers, the eſtabliſhed laws of Providence do not ſquare with our ideas of juſtice—if men in any degree were ſufferers for actions which it was not in their power to prevent—yet do not mad perſons ſuffer for infirmities which are involuntary? Is not even bodily deformity, to an unphiloſophical mind, often as ſeverely felt by the inſults it incurs, as moral deformity? Do not often the innocent and even the highly virtuous, ſuffer from the vices of others? does not an affectionate parent feel more mental pain for the loſs of a child, than one who has leſs natural affection? but where can be the injuſtice in admitting of ſufferings for the benevolent end of correction, and to produce the greater capability of a future happineſs?

But I do not wiſh to deprive the virtuous of that pleaſing reward of goodneſs which lies in the approbation of their fellow creatures; nor to

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emancipate the vicious from the cenſures of ſociety. No, Hortenſia; there is a rational praiſe and diſpraiſe which will not be found diſcordant with the principles of neceſſity. But the firſt muſt be tempered with ſobriety, and the ſecond with pity; it muſt alſo be accompanied with that Chriſtian charity which induces the trial of moral lenitives, inſtead of cauſtics, for reformation, with that Chriſtian charity which is always active in the beſt means for reformation, which is apt to teach, patient to ſuffer, and ready to forgive injuries; which mourns over the miſeries of a fallen brother, becauſe it regards vice as the worſt of human defects, and which never puniſhes from a principle of cruelty and revenge, but from the neceſſities of the occaſion. Such a moderation in our diſapprobation of the erroneous elections of our fellow creatures, which accords ſo exactly with the precepts of the goſpel, will be ſo far from any encouragement to vice, that it will naturally have a contrary effect. For if vice was always conſidered as a quality of ſo degrading a nature as to demand the commiſeration of every humane mind, it would from that averſion which we have for pity when we find it united with a certain degree of contempt, be more avoided than ſickneſs or deformity of body, if health, beauty, ſickneſs, or deformity of body were among the objects of our choice. Thus, Hortenſia, we ſhould loſe a great

deal of our anxiety for thoſe externals which now employ our moſt earneſt cares; even our friendly compliments would be tinctured with our philoſophy; and the mental health of thoſe we love become the prime objects of our care.—Is all well within—how ſtand the affections to-day—are the volitions of the right caſt? would be the queſtions conſtantly joined to our ſalutations; and I dare ſay you will agree with me, that were ſuch ſentiments of pious charity generally to prevail, and to be thus expreſſed, that they would become a ſtronger principle for the enforcement of virtuous volitions, than thoſe ſanctions of rewards and puniſhments which now exiſt in the intereſted ſtate of human ſentiment.

LETTER XVIII.

The ſame Subject concluded.

THE arguments which have been already urged in favour of neceſſity, if candidly conſidered, Hortenſia, will be a ſufficient ground for inducing a greater ſtrength and vigor of religious ſentiment, than can be induced by the belief of an unqualified liberty of will. For it has been ſhewn, that the virtue of all moral agents, and the perfection of God himſelf, have their grounds in the neceſſity which ariſes from motives; and that this neceſſity is ſo far from carrying with it any principle derogatory to a rational agent, that it conſtitutes the very eſſence of rational agency: and as ſuch, it was becoming the goodneſs of God to beſtow on man; and that this goodneſs is ſo tempered with wiſdom, that every miſchief which can ariſe from it is as far corrected as the nature of things will admit, and perhaps it is corrected in ſuch a manner as to admit of no degree of poſitive evil. Farther, it is to be aſſerted, that the doctrine of philoſophical liberty is hoſtile to every

rational idea which can be formed of perfect benevolence and wiſdom; for this ſuppoſes, that God beſtows an attribute on man, merely for a pretence to inflict a puniſhment on him, which in its degree of rigor outdoes any finite offence, even on the ſuppoſition that a creature having the free uſe of his reaſon, ſhould willingly prefer deſtruction to ſelf preſervation.

The principles of liberty, when attentively conſidered, will be found to degrade the character of the Deity; whereas in the contrary doctrine, infinite wiſdom and goodneſs can be traced through all the concatenation of moral cauſes and their effects. It is alſo obſervable, that though the voice of revelation does not deſcend into the nice diſtinctions of metaphyſical reaſoning, and talks only of freedom in a popular ſenſe, the freedom of action correſpondent to volition; yet it every where preſents motives to the human mind, as the only impellers of volition. And in all the diſpenſations of providence which we obſerve to take place in the human ſyſtem, ſuffering is commonly attended with the ſalutary effects of reformation.

But it is alſo ſaid, that the doctrine of moral neceſſity tends to relax every principle of attention to a rational intereſt, by inducing an opinion, that all creatures are chained to the foot of fate,

and have it not in their power to make their own fortune, nor meliorate or aggravate the evils of a predetermined deſtiny. This objection, Hortenſia, carries an appearance of weight, but it hangs as heavy on the doctrine of liberty as on neceſſity; for the poſitive nature of this determination reſts on the preſcience of God, an attribute which ſeems neceſſary for ſuch a providential government as is agreeable to the majeſty of the Deity, and abſolutely declared by the voice of revelation to be inherent in him. And whether certain creatures are born with ſuch corrupt and infirm natures, as neceſſarily to occaſion depraved volitions independent of motives, which cannot be denied by the free-willers, for otherwiſe there could be no accounting for depraved elections; or whether the weak natures of ſome creatures are depraved by motives, is of very little conſequence on the queſtion of a predetermined deſtiny. The doctrine of neceſſity however has this preference; it ſhows men the way how they may arrive at the deſired port, and it rouſes the active principles of the mind; for where a rational intereſt is once thoroughly underſtood, the very law of our nature forbids that ſupineneſs which is ſuppoſed to take place in this inſtance. Aſk the miſer, aſk the man of ambition, whether the one will forbear the offered means of obtaining wealth, and the other of power on any ſpeculative opinion of a predetermined

mined deſtiny? Or aſk the philoſopher of cool and regular affections, whether he will forbear the offered means of advancing his intereſts on any ſuch ſpeculative opinion? Aſk the infirm man who is tottering down a deep deſcent of ſtairs, whether he will forbear to lay hold of aſſiſtance which the banniſters afford, on the faith of any ſpeculative opinion? And laſtly, aſk the man who is fond of life, and finds his health invaded, whether he will withhold the means which medicine affords, on the faith of any ſpeculative opinion?

It is granted, Hortenſia, that the doctrine of moral neceſſity cannot rationally allow of infinite puniſhment for finite crimes: yet it does not pretend to ſet any limits but thoſe of eternity to a ſharpneſs of correction, which may exceed every thing that man e'er felt, or the extenſive powers of human imagination can paint. The neceſſarian allows, that the puniſhment muſt be ſharp indeed, and muſt admit of a rigor and a duration which omnipotence can alone inflict, to be capable of correcting thoſe profligate characters who have continued firm in iniquity, and withſtood the ordinary chaſtiſements that attend vice in this ſtage of exiſtence. The neceſſarian argues, that the degree of our happineſs in another life, depends on the progreſs we have made in this, towards a capacity of virtuous enjoyment. He contends for a neceſſity of correcting, by puniſhment, the depravity which

which ariſes from vicious habits, actions, and propenſities, before any creature can by the nature of things in the ordinary courſe of God's government, be capable of a reception into the habitations of the bleſſed. He contends for a neceſſary time of probation for the contracting good habits, and acquiring ſuch an experience in the ways of well doing, as may confirm thoſe good reſolutions and ſtrengthen that infant virtue which follows the voice of an awakened conſcience. He altogether rejects as a vain chimera, and a deluſive hope, the efficacy of a death-bed repentance, for the avoiding thoſe tremendous conſequences which follow a diſobedience to the dictates of reaſon and the commands of God. And he contends, that every man muſt one time or another ſet his hand to the oar, and become the inſtrument of his own happineſs, or be certain to remain in irremediable miſery.

It is on theſe grounds the neceſſarian affirms, that the opinion which he has adopted affords him the beſt arguments to rouſe the negligent and careleſs being to an attention to his rational intereſt, both in ſhowing him the tremendous dangers which follow the neglect of his powers and faculties, and the means to uſe them to the beſt advantage. Arguments which muſt have their proper uſe, if there is any thing in pain and miſery to which the human mind is naturally averſe, or any

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thing in eaſe and pleaſure to which it is naturally inclined.

To the fifth objection to the doctrine of neceſſity. That "by its introducing a negation of all merit and demerit, the pleaſing ſenſe of ſelf approbation will be taken away, and with it the more uſeful ſenſe of remorſe and ſhame, thoſe ſtrong incentives to repentance and amendment." It may be anſwered, that there appears little grounds for ſelf approbation on the very beſt uſe of a faculty which is exerciſed without the proper motive to influence ſuch an exertion. That when obedience has no other grounds than the indulgence of humour, it can never be conſidered of ſo meritorious a nature as an obedience grounded on the obligation of duty, the proper impelling motive. That the pride of an independent goodneſs is ridiculous in a finite creature, and is condemned by the principles of religion. That it taints the beauty of the faireſt virtue, by filling men with an arrogant ſelf eſtimation, and by inclining them to look with contempt inſtead of pity on the more fallible nature of their fellow creatures. That ſuch an arrogant ſelf eſtimation tends to weaken that ſtrong ſenſe of allegiance and dependance which is due from the creature to the Creator, who is the only ſource of all good, and without whoſe providential aſſiſtance in affording the powers and the means, with their proper uſe, none of his creatures can in

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any ſenſe of the word arrive at any degree of virtue. That the doctrine of neceſſity guards its diſciples by the modeſty and humility of its principles, from the ſeductive influence of a ſpiritual and a moral pride, becauſe, inſtead of filling the mind with vain and intoxicating phantaſms of a ſelf moving principle of good, it repreſents the true ſtate of human dependance. And whilſt it warns men to guard againſt every inlet of vice, and excites them to keep watch day and night leſt the enemy ſhould come and find them ſlumbering over their duty, it teaches them an humble, though not a fearful, dependance on the power and wiſdom of the Deity, graciouſly to afford them ſuch means of aſſiſtance as are beſt calculated to inſure their ſalvation.

In reply to the objection, that a belief in the doctrine of neceſſity would produce a negation of theſe ſtrong incentives to repentance, the acute feelings of remorſe and ſhame; it is to be obſerved, that no man ever felt leſs concern for the breaking a limb, on the ſenſe, that he never intended to do himſelf any harm. That no fond parent ever felt leſs regret for the premature and accidental loſs of a child, from the conſideration, that the accident was not occaſioned by an intentional conduct. And that it is not the nature of man to ſooth the anguiſh which attend ſenſations, called forth by thoſe impreſſions which the misfortunes attending moral turpitude produce by re-

medies deduced from ſpeculative reaſoning. Diſhonour, in the worſt ſenſe of the word, the total loſs of moral reputation, the fierce reſentment of injured ſociety, the preſent hour of irremediable woe, the dreadful proſpective of more laſting ſuffering in the dark volume of futurity, will all be felt in the full proportion of their energetic powers, and triumph over the faint attempts which can be made by the human mind, to ſhield itſelf from ſuffering by the attainment of an apathy induced from philoſophic reaſoning. The mere abuſe of will, can be rectified by a correction of that abuſe; but the neceſſarian ſees with horror, that his misfortunes, or his errors, have led him into evils which have occaſioned a depravity in his nature, that ſubjects him beyond the power of his original diſpoſition to the impulſe of bad motives. He feels the encreaſed ſtrength of the enemy, and that he has loſt a great deal of native dignity and beauty. And vice being as hateful to our fellow creatures as it is inimical to our own peace, can it be reaſonably ſuppoſed that a man will not uſe his endeavours towards avoiding ſo great an evil, when circumſtances bring the proper conviction of its magnitude to his mind? Can it be reaſonably ſuppoſed, that if a man was to carry about with him any natural infirmity which rendered him odious to ſociety, that he would not regret this misfortune, though he ſhould have happened to have incurred

curred it by ſome error, which, as circumſtances then ſtood, he had been impelled to run into; and that he would not immediately ſet about the means which his underſtanding pointed out to him, as a remedy for the defect? And laſtly, Hortenſia, can it reaſonably be ſuppoſed, that the ſenſe of freedom, from voluntary guilt, will prevent a lunatic in his lucid intervals from taking hellebore, or any other medicine which he believes to have ſufficient power to abate or cure his malady, and thus to remove the ſource of his unfortunate volitions?

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